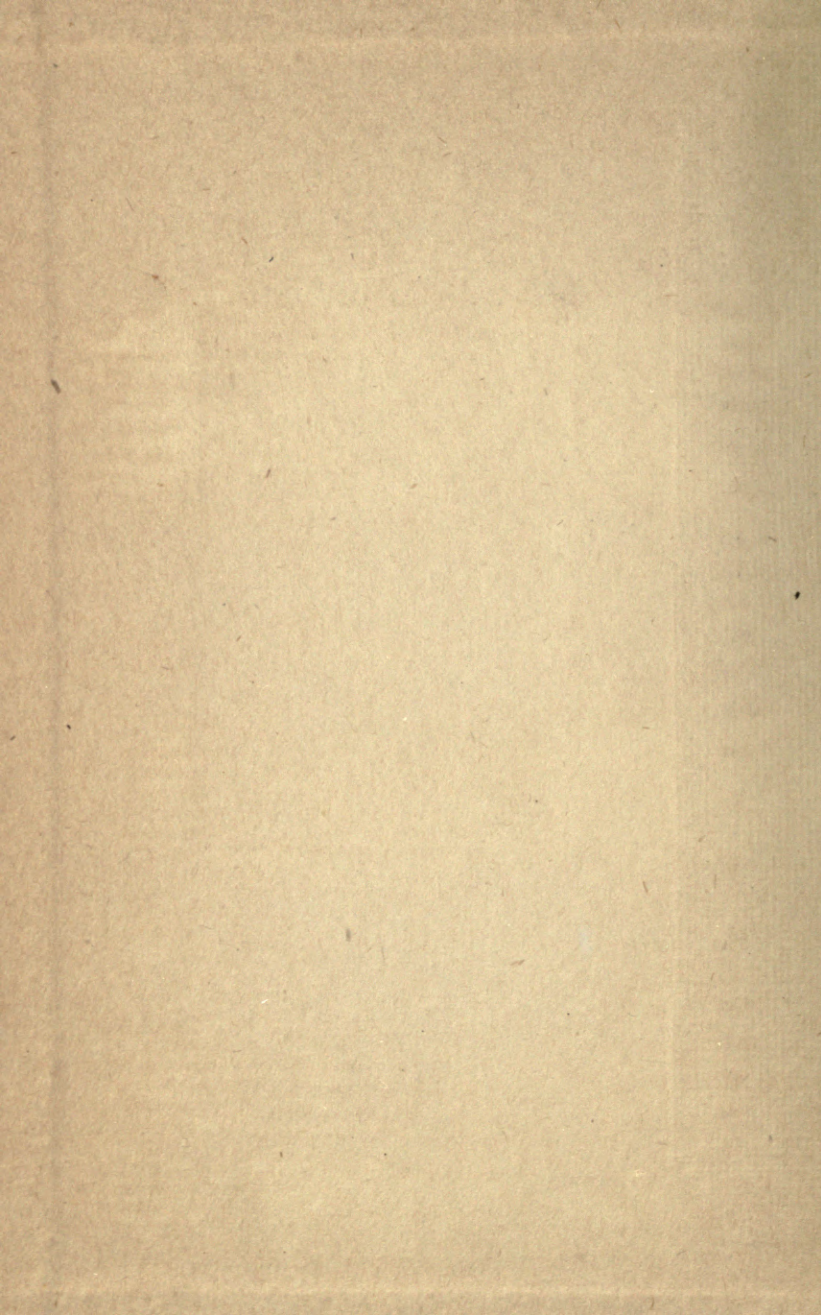
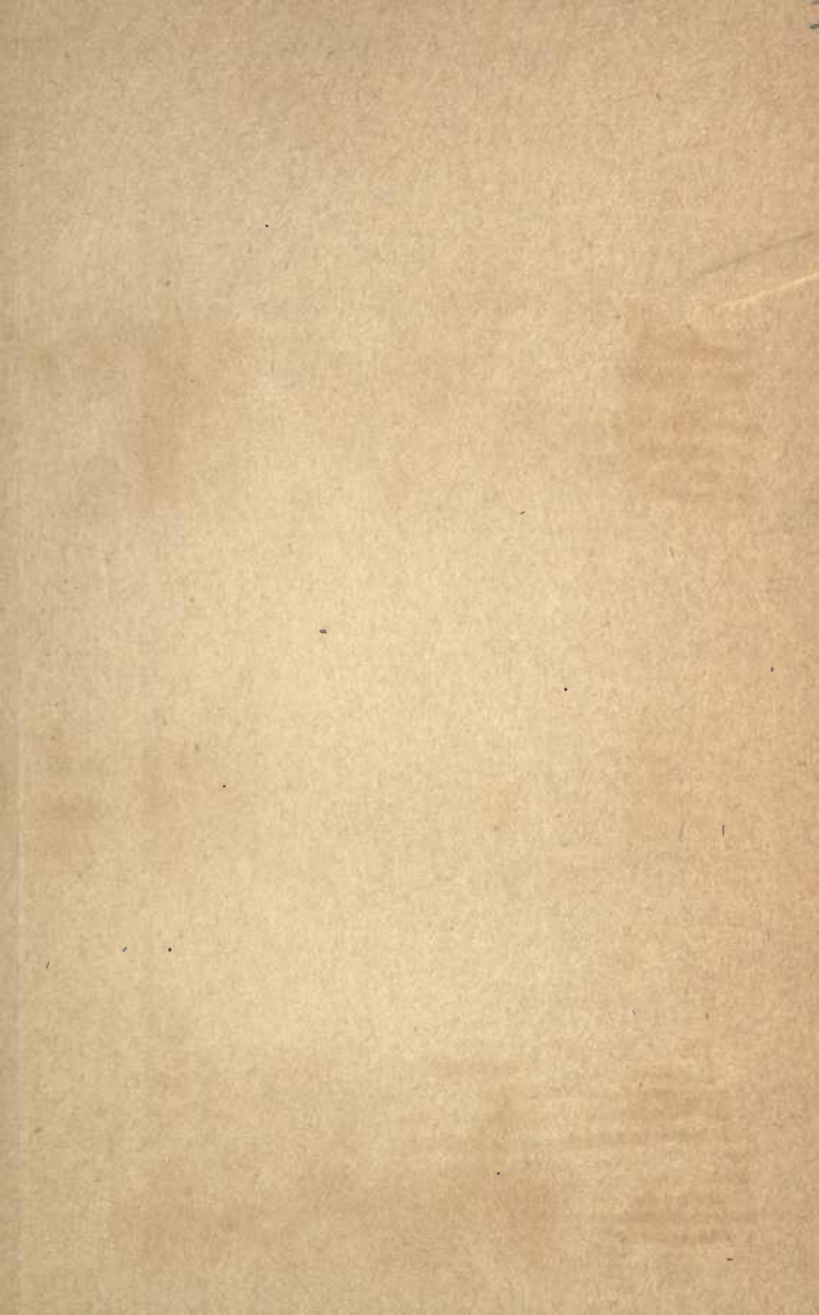


Links
of
Gold



Joseph Ware







Links of Gold

BY

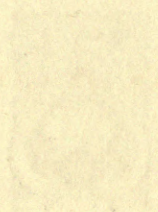
JOSEPH WARE, LL.D., M.A.



BOSTON
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Links of Gold

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LINKS OF GOLD

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“My father dear,
An ancient poet sweetly sings that love
Transmuteth iron fetters into gold.”

Such were the words of Princess Miriam.
She was the beautiful, the only child
Of Eleazer, ancient Patriarch
Of Galilee.

The stiff and sterner will
Doth often break under sufficient strain,
Where bending purpose springeth back again;
So the firm nature of the Patriarch
Was by her mild persistency o’ercome.
His only child was by indulgence spoiled,
And she was beautiful beyond compare.
As the opening bud unfoldeth into flower,
She in the likeness of her mother grew,
Who while still young and fair was forced by
death
To leave her helpless infant in the world
To other’s care. The father’s tender love
Clung fondly to this frail support.

Now they together sat in the wide hall
Of the high castle tower of Magadan
That frowns above the Galilean Sea.
His troubled face was full of stern resolve.

He had been trying to impress the thought,
To marry poor is to become a slave.

He answered her,

“The poet also sings
Of love as blind.

Why canst thou not discern
That Prince Samar, of all thy suitors, hath
To recommend him to thy favor, wealth,
Title, appearance, and is one of us?”

“Father, is love a thing to barter with?”

“Well, then, young Caius, the centurion,
May some day rise to greater fame and power,
For he is just and wise.”

“Is love, you think,
To be a ladder by the which we climb
Into position? Judah loves me well.”

“Speak not his hated name to me again.
The Jews hate us thou knowest. Love cannot
grow
In soil of hate.”

“I said not that I loved.”

“Love uses a mute language of its own.
The palpitating heart, the crimson cheek,
The bashful consciousness, the heavy sigh,
The absent mind, unconsciously betray
The heart.”

“Or might be mere coquettish art.
Father, he vows his love and constancy.”

“And what, my innocent, are lover’s vows?
In over-heated passion are they forged,

Hot-blown with sighs, at the first strain they
break."

"Rather the golden links are forged in
heaven;

And always heaven is where we truly love."

Seeing her fretted, he unbent and kissed
Her burning cheek. Love ever quickens love;
In her hands, white and soft, she framed his face,
And kissed the parting of the silver locks.
She said, "Father, I would be dutiful."

And for the moment thought herself sincere.
With tender touch he smoothed her glossy hair.

"My child, beauty is woman's capital.
Like wealth, unwisely used, it is a curse;
Or too much treasured, tempts the robber hand.
The Prince Samar will give thee fair exchange.
The fairest blossom often soonest fades."

"Is love a costly, rare exotic, then?"

"Unselfish love is much too delicate
To bloom in our distempered atmosphere."

She saw the trouble dark'ning in his face.
Smiling through tears, she took his trembling
hand,

And sat beside him on the rich divan.

"Father, forgive my disobedience.

Many may seem to love us, but the soul
Can only truly blend with kindred soul.
Although that one may lack in wealth and
power,

Yet he is ever fondly in my thought.

I would be dutiful. What shall I do? "

"Already I have made the final choice."

He crushed Love's blossom with too rude a
grasp.

"Then love is not considered."

"Yes, controlled.

A true esteem may not be purchased, yet
Should riches hinder true affection, pray? "

"They often do absorb the mind and heart
As worldly things absorb our piety."

"Well! Well! My little saint, where learned
ye this? "

"Not of the one who does not wish to know.
The world is blinded by the sheen of gold,
For Solomon, the wise, discerned it not."

"Daughter, my counsel falls on heedless ears.
The young heed not the danger in their path;
Even attainment of evil gives a zest."

"Why was love given if not to guide our
way? "

"My child, then why not heed a father's
love? "

"I do; but, father, would it not be sin
To sell myself for anything but love? "

"Is it no sin to break thy promise then? "

"Would it be right had I been with the
prince?

I only promised not to go with Judah
To the Island Carnival."

"Daughter?

Last night I saw thee with that man I hate."

"He only met me at the landing place."

"And took thee to the sinful revelry."

"No, he did not."

"Ye promised not to go.
Didst thou? Answer me plainly, yea or nay."

"Well, I was there. It is a lovely place.

A real island built on floating pines
And light materials, and the made soil
Is heaped in hills and spread in grassy plains
Where plants and shrubs, and even forests
grow."

"What holds it there, against the wind and
wave? "

"Great anchors hold it with strong iron
chains."

"Such vast expense must have some noble
use."

"What has more use than pleasure in this
world? "

"True pleasure has its use. What kind is
there? "

"Dancing and playing games and making
love.

There is a fountain spurting ruby wine.

Oh, it is lovely, sparkles in very joy."

"Our pleasures are the index of the mind.

Such as thou namest are the frivolous
And light; and tempting, lead to greater sins."

"Is pleasure sin? The best of people go."

" 'Tis ever so, the hideous devil seeks
Respectability."

" You have no right
To speak of innocent amusements so."

< " Daughter, what may be innocent itself
May by enticement lead to greater harm. *love,*
The kind of music, the unseemly hours,
Unnatural excitement, debauch the mind." >

" Father, your people dance before their God,
In a wild frenzy, too. You think it right."

" No more ; thou didst spend the night in rev-
elry,
And still persist in loving that vile Jew."

" Beloved father, I have heard you say
That love is all alike — from God the source ;
Differs alone in object and degree —
The love of self, the love of kin and kind,
The love of man and maid. All hearts desire
Is the infusing atmosphere of heaven."

" It is not love, with thee, but wilfulness."

" I must go in ; the skies are lowering."

" Hear me ! Too long I've borne thy way-
wardness.

Dog of a Jew ! For him thy promises
Are falsified."

" I will no longer hear
Him spoken of in such a way as that.
He is the soul of honor. As we sat
Idling the hour in our own pleasure boat,
He slipped the cable just to frighten me.

We drifted but a little from the shore,
The setting of the scene was love's delight,
The lingering sun had kissed the sea good night,
The moon rose with a pale uncritic light —"

"Cease, cease, no more of idle sentiment.
The greatest falsehood is a partial truth.
Better to lose thy life than honor. That vile
dog!"

Tears are a woman's final argument.
Weeping, she clasped him in her snowy arms
And sobbed,

"Oh, he was not at all to blame.
He is the soul of honor. Oh, forgive!
And I will never disobey again."

Half penitential tears softened his heart.
He kissed her, said,

"Now heaven has heard my prayer.
I love thee, darling, as I love my life.
Forgive thee? Aye, will bless, as more I see
The image of thy mother. Fair thou art,
Too fair almost; the precious gem doth tempt
The robber. Heaven bless my darling child."

Then as a wild gazelle, with nimble feet
She tripped the marble stair. In her own room
Before a massive silver mirror stood,
And in coquettish poses turned about.

Light as the flying shadows of the clouds
Upon a summer field, her changing moods.

Her nervous fingers touched a lustrous pearl
That hung above the palpitating heart.

She thought of Prince Samar, who gave it her.
 Beneath her ear, she twirled an amethyst,
 The costly gift of the centurion.
 With a heart flutter and a sigh she saw
 Her plain gold ring, token of Judah's love.
 These light-winged thoughts were spoken to her-
 self,

“Surely a demon dark possesses me;
 I do the things I know I should not do,
 Do not the things I should, and all for love;
 And yet I know not if I love at all.

↳ The signs are that I care for Judah most.
His coming stirs my heart; with him the time
 Too quickly flies; and when away, my thoughts
 To him like doves unto their windows fly. >

But then the prince loves me I know. Last
 night

His eyes expressed the longing of his heart.
 I could have everything my soul desires.

And the centurion, sometime he might
 Be emperor — the Romans have one wife —
 I would be empress then of all the world.

We have such merry times! As with a
 flowery chain
 I lead them as my willing slaves.

The old
 Forget when they were young.
 Not go again?
 Ha! Ha! There never was a lover spoke
 The truth.”

Worried by her own waywardness,
She raised her beautiful bare arms and loosed
The jeweled bands that bound her heavy hair,
Then on a couch of damascene reclined,
Drew up the silken covers, closed her eyes.

A Canaanitish maid stole softly in.
Miriam said,

“ Good Zoa, I would sleep ;
Bring here the fan that has the charm of love,
Made of the feathers of the cooing dove,
Put on it lotus perfume, wooing sleep.
Oh, why should love be so disquieting?
Sing me that sweet suggestive lullaby.”

Good Zoa sang,

“ Sleepy grove of Arabie,
Bush of spice and flowering tree —
Sleep, my little darling, sleep.

Sleepy air of summertime,
Drone of beetle, hum of bee —
Sleep, my little darling, sleep.

Grassy bank and cooling breeze,
Scent of wood and purl of stream —
Sleep, my little darling, sleep.

Closing eye and setting sun,
Twilight soft and falling dew —
Sleep, my little darling, sleep.”

The soft suggestion of the lullaby

Calmed her to sleep, until the sun had set.
The brazen lamps of perfumed oil burned
bright.

She half awoke.

“How long was I asleep?”

“Not long, sleep on.”

“Zoa, was Judah here?”

“If not, he will be, for the bee will find
The sweet.”

“I dreamed he was and loved me not.
If I must dream, I will not sleep again.
Dear, if you know, come tell me; what is love?”

“It seems to be an inward flame.”

“How so?”

“Because the victim heaveth burning sighs
And hot blood rushes to the blushing cheek.”

“It seems to be an apt conceit. Tell me
What kindles it. My father thinks one may
At will. If I can thus light up my love,
Who of my suitors shall receive its warmth?”

“Well, let us make an inventory first.”

“Proceed.”

“The Prince is medium in height
And has a dark complexion; hair is black,
As are his eyes. His countenance, once good,
Bears the plain signs of his debauchery —
The highest angel has the deepest fall.
Over against it all, he has more wealth
Than his extravagance can waste. And then
He also has commercial courtesy,

The kind that has a purpose sinister."

"My tutor maid, I see you like him not.
Go on."

"Now Caius, the centurion,
Is brave and strong and of a martial form.
He has dark hair, brown eyes, a heavy brow,
Arched nose and rugged countenance.
His occupation is not of the best.
The butcher has no honor from his trade;
Yet butchers of men are heroes of the world."

"Judah? What can you say of him? Go on."

"Judah, the scribe, is of the royal type,
The blood of David and of Solomon.
The type is of the Moabiteess, Ruth.
They have a fair complexion, auburn hair,
Blue eyes, straight nose, and open countenance.
Their manners are sincere and affable,
Yet with it all Judah has little gold."

"But he is gold himself."

"Yet has it not."

"Better to be than have."

"Here is a note."

The Princess' trembling fingers broke the seal.

She knew the writing, for the skillful scribe
Had modeled the embellished characters.
She kissed the perfumed vellum o'er and o'er,—
The love note of an oriental read.

“ Arise, my fair one, come away;
Make haste, my love;
Be like unto the roe,
Or the young hart upon the mountains.

Come with me to Lebanon,
To the glorious sides of Sannin,
To the top of Hermon, my dove,
To the flowering meadows of Carmel.

Thine eyes are the fountains of Ophel.
Thy ruddy lips are sweet
As the grapes of Eschol,
Thy cheeks as the apples of Temar.

Arise, my love, and come away;
The all revealing sun
Hideth his face;
The silent moon to love inviteth.”

The Princess read it over many times,
Interpreted in many ways each word,
And then turning abruptly to her maid,
“ Zoa, have I too many lovers, think? ”
“ You may have. Although many may love
you,
(The love of one only can be returned.)
The heart may not partition out its love.”
“ That is the way of life; get most for least,
And like the butterfly sip honeyed sweets
From every kind of bloom.”

“ My dear, you have

Expensive tastes. The Prince could best supply

Your wants. You love authority
And the centurion can give you that.
But everyone loves to be loved. It seems
As though the Scribe would truly love you
most."

"And still you have not made a choice for
me."

"Why do you not consult your horoscope?"

"I have consulted our astrologer.

He wrinkled up his brow and pursed his lips
And muttered doleful things; and then for fear
He would receive no pay, spoke with more cheer;
And I was left no wiser than before."

"Well, I will choose for you. Rachel, your
friend,

Being a Jew might learn to love the Jew.
As your wise father says, he could love her.
And you shall take the Roman to your heart."

◀ "Stop there! I will not hear you speak like
that." ▶

"Pardon! In the mirror of your jealousy
The perfect image of true love appears.
Judah awaits you."

"I must go to him."

"Oh, do not leave the court."

Good Zoa bathed
And then anointed her with perfumed oils;
Her tresses bound with jeweled bands of gold;

Over the white embroidery she threw
A robe of silk ; painted her lovely cheeks
The tint of ripened fruit ; stained her sweet lips
Like red ripe cherries ; the expressive eyes enlarged

With umber ; on her neck and arms glittered
Jewels, on her ankles tinkling bells.

Vision of oriental loveliness,
She in the silver mirror saw herself —
The cause of woman's vanity since Eve
First saw her image in the glassy pool.
She held a jewel up to Zoa's gaze.

"A brilliant, Caius Marcus gave it me.
It is a beauty — yet I love it not.
The Roman seems so very passionless.
My pride resents their haughty sympathy.
Darling, for you the jewel and the kiss."

"Without the kiss I would not value it."

"Our trysting place is in the lower court,
Trip down the stair a little way and look."

The maiden tiptoed to the upper stair,
Saw Judah standing by the fountain's marge,
Nipping a leaf in his impatient thought.
In his intense expectancy he heard
Her, started to the stair —

She backward flew.

"Speak, speak, is he so frightful?"

"Oh, he looked."

"Well?"

"Thought it you."

"What did he say?"

"My dear."

"And what?"

"You kept me waiting for so long."

"What more? Did he not sigh? How did he look?"

Lose not a syllable, nor slightest move.

Did he not speak my name? Be quick."

"I ran."

"And woman-like looked back. What did he then?"

"As the sun-worshiper he gazed aloft."

"I must go down to him. Kiss me good night."

Leave not the door unbarred. You know my knock.

To any that may call I am asleep.

Some wine. Be careful, walls have ears.

Night birds

Fly low. Good night."

"Good night. He will behold

The brightest angel burst the crystal heavens."

Zoa, the maid, before the Princess kneeled,

"Oh, hear me! Hear me!"

"Well, what awful thing?"

"Promise to stay within the tower to-night?"

"Who taught you that?"

"I had an awful dream,

The east wind swept a mist across the sea,
That blew and wreathed itself in phantom
shapes.

One was like yours — I can not speak of it.
I heard —” She placed her hands upon her
ears —

“Wild wailing cries and pleadings of distress.”
The maiden’s voice was broken by her sobs.

“Dreaming again.”

“No, no, not all a dream;
For Zogbarak, my lover, crossed the sea,
An oath-bound secret locked within his breast.
He charged me so,

‘As you love Miriam,
See that she does not leave the tower to-night.’
Oh, promise, in the hearing of thy God.”

“Jehovah witness that I promise you
I will not go outside the tower to-night.
Good night.”

“Good night.”

With bright expectancy
She as an angel swept adown the stair.
The oriental moon shone brightly down,
Lighting the shadows of the open court.
The silent stars filled the clear firmament.
The sparkling waters of the fountain leaped
And broke into a thousand tiny moons,
And birds that sing their plaintive songs at
night
In golden cages hung. A lover’s heaven!

The faithful Judah met her on the stair.
Taking her jeweled hand, he led her down
Into a shadowy nook, under low palms.

He drew her willing head onto his arm,
The lagging moments leaped to present bliss.
Looking into her eyes,

“Darling, one word
From thy sweet lips will make my joy complete.
I know your noble father loves me not.
I can not change my lineage, if I would.
I am not rich, but have a cottage home,
Where love enthroned will fairest palace make.
I only offer love for love.”

A tear
Glit’ring — it might be a coquettish tear —
Entangled in her silken lashes hung.

“Dearest, why is love’s pathway so bestrewn
With sharpest thorns? My father thinks that
love,

Without some other bond, will not endure.
A palace for a cottage seems too much to pay,
And a mere fancy that might quickly pass;
Yet love never a prudent bargain made.”

He kissed the trembling tear drop e’er it fell.

“And if I thought our love would not endure
And grow with age more golden, as the head
Of grain, then were the sacrifice too great.”

Her head was nestled closer to his breast.

“Dearest, your noble love ennoble me.
Away from you I seem to be possessed.

*Such love
grows*

Oh, what was that? Someone is at the gate.

Hark! Hark! They knock! Judah, I am afraid

That father has discovered that you are here,
And called the Roman guard. What shall we do? "

"I will away."

"O dear, it is too late!"

"Then I must hide."

"The secret chamber. Quick!
Here is the door."

He snatched a hasty kiss
And stepped within. The door on darkness closed.

He stood in silence and uncertainty,
Then moved with careful step, feeling the stones.
He placed his ear against the heavy walls
And heard the muffled tramp of armored feet,
And then a dead oppressive silence came.
Moments longer than hours seemed to him.

"Away from you, I seem to be possessed,"
Rang in his thought, as doth a bell at night.
A dim suspicion crept into his mind.

"Betrayed? Trapped like a beast? And love
the bait? "

He would not think of it, hated himself,
And as he strove, the dread grew on him more.
"If she were true, something might happen her,
And I be left alone in here to die."

Shaking with terror, he was overcome;
Weakened, he sank upon the musty pave.

Now Caius Marcus, the centurion,
Had been admitted through the tower gate,
And fickle-hearted Miriam with art
Intuitive to woman, smiling, stood
As though she had come down to welcome him.

Caius, with helmet raised, drew near and
bowed.

She gave her hand; he kissed the finger tips.

"You do me honor, Princess Miriam."

"I do not seem so dangerous, do I,
That you should call with all your armor on?"

"Nay, not for your offense, but your defense.
Most gracious princess, pray excuse the time,
And manner of our coming."

"Caius, you
Are welcome. Arms become you well."

"It is no fitting garb in which to woo
A maiden's fancy."

"Be not sure of that."

"Sometime I hope to be allowed to call
On you more pleasantly arrayed than this.
Our errand now admits of no delay.
Of late the robbers of the eastern shore
Are growing overbold; the caravans
Require a double guard. Two robbers now
Are in this tower. One will steal your jewels;
One seeks to rob your father of yourself."

"It can not be, go search the palace through."

"One robber is the lover of your maid."

"Await me here, I will go look for her."

"With your permission, we will also go."

Caius had left a guard around the tower
And felt no need of secrecy. He tramped
The sweeping stair, and reckoned not on love
Outwitting him.

For through the vacant court
Tiptoed Zoa, the maid, and Zogbarak,
A massive giant, followed after her.
Right well she knew the secrets of the tower.
The giant, bending quickly, stepped within
Its hiding place. His intuition felt
A presence.

"Who or what are you?" He stood
Peering into the darkness, with his hand
Upon his dagger. "Man or devil, speak."
Close by, the dreaded darkness answer gave,

"If I mistake not you are Zogbarak.
If so, like interest will make us friends."

"The voice of Judah! Yes, we should be
friends ;

By all the gods, our necks depend on it."

"And you are hiding from the Roman, too."

"Yes, that is nothing new, for me at least."

"What can we do? "

"Nothing that we can see.
I came to have Zoa warn Miriam,

Lover-like lingered long."

"Warn her of what?"

"Not to attend the Island Festival.

Samar"—He hissed it fiercely through his teeth —

"Admired and honored for his wealth alone,
I know to be a base and lecherous devil."

"Explain! Be quick! What are his dark designs?"

"This night may be the last for Miriam."

"How? How?"

"Heretofore her cunning coquetry
Led him to think that he could gain her love.
But disappointed, he will now use force,
Enticing with his island revelry,
Will drag her to his den of infamy."

"She took a solemn oath to stay at home."

"You may not like to hear it — Miriam
Is growing vain and frivolous. As well
Attempt to bind the air with cords, as such
A character with oaths."

"She must not go."

"He has her promise,
And we are shut in here."

"O God, hear me!

O God, hear my prayer!"

"Be calm; run not before the gods, but wait
Their time. Whether we will or not, we must.
Hearken, a skillful general should know
His enemy. Who knows but what this time

Is for such purpose given? Listen to me.

The Prince—God save the honor—claims
descent

From Solomon, who kept his most loved wife
Mured in a royal cave beyond the sea.

He claims his title has come down from them.

And once while wandering in the wilderness,
He met a tattered hermit bent and thin
Laboring up the rugged mountain side,
Who seemed to be as ancient as the rocks.
He helped the weary recluse to his den,
Gathered some sticks and cooked a frugal meal,
Then afterward he stayed and cared for him;
By close attention gained his confidence
And learned from him about the treasury
Of Solomon. He told the hoary seer
That he himself was heir to the rich king
Who locked his treasure in that ancient cave.
At last the wizard gave to him the key
And as a shadow vanished out of sight.”
“Satan it was.”

“There is no surer way
To ruin men than give them useless wealth.
When satiated with indulgences,
He organized a band of Canaanites.
I, for my strength, was chosen to be chief.”

“So you are leader of his robber band.”

“Our hiding place is in the mountain cave,
And here he drags the victims of his lust,
And then leaves them to perish horribly.”

To us he gives the treasure that we take."

"And by this booty holds you in his grasp."

"Not that alone. For when I see the land,
Valleys and vine-clad hills and happy homes,
With bending orchards, waving fields of grain,
And the walled cities, that are ours by right,
Wrested from us, my people menial slaves —
All by the sanction of a cruel god —

Then why should I, a Canaanite, have pity?"

"And yet you should."

"Nay, Scribe, in this bad world
Goodness is martyrdom."

"O no, not so;

«Goodness will always have a sure reward.»

"Sweet youth, I wish I had your innocence.
When you are old you will know more or less."

"The innocent must be the happiest."

"And be the prey of every ravenous beast.
Samar, the prince, more than a hungry wolf
Thirsts for the blood of innocent young lambs.
He wears a golden mask his hideous
Deformity to hide."

"O, I will die!

We must get out of here and save her life."

"And that we will when thou hast told us
how."

"Under fair show, he is an incarnate fiend."

"And that he is and worse.

Often at night

I see the ghost of poor old Ithamar,

His venerable locks clotted with gore,
And on his face a pained and pleading look.

We as a tempest struck his caravan.
In the confusion and uncertainty,
Samar dragged Rachel, screaming, from her
tent.

Her feeble father clung with trembling hands
To her. To think the devil with a sword
Cut off both hands. With their mute pleading
stumps

Following still, the monster struck him down."

"And you permitted it?"

"And that is why
His ghost impeaches me. I hate myself."

"To seize his prey the cunning spider lurks;
Like a drained fly she will be cast away."

"It seems so long. Oh, will they never
come?"

"They promised not. If they should love us,
we
Are safe. If not, some time in after years
A stranger curious may stumble on
Our musty skeletons."

"Which way think you
The court is?"

"Place your ear against the wall."

"There is a tremor as of armored feet."

"Oh, see! Back! Back! Be quick!" he
fiercely hissed.

Drawing their swords they sprang aside. The
door

Now stood ajar. Zoa, bearing a torch,
And Miriam sprang in, and the door closed.

"Oh, blessed sight!"

"Oh, then you doubted us."

"Why shut the door?"

"Hist, do not speak so loud."

"What now?"

"Zoa, go forward with the light."

She held the torch against the hither wall.

"Look for a cross mark —

dim — Here!

Zogbarak,

Try this door."

The rusty hinges shrieked

A shrill dissent.

They, bending, looked far down,
And saw a deep still inlet of the sea,
A slippery stair of stone led down to it.
Around the landing many boats were chained.

Zogbarak took the torch. They followed him
Down the steep narrow way.

He grasped the hand
Of Zoa, helped her into a slender boat.

Under his deep glad stroke it outward flew
Onto the silent sea. But Miriam
With Judah rowed along the shore. She cried,

"O such a lovely night! And the kind sea!"

Now let the Romans rummage through the tower."

"Yes, darling, how much better than be mured,

Shut like a beast, in that dark musty place.

Where shall we go? "

"And why go anywhere? "

"Darling, to be with you is heaven indeed, And yet it is not right that we are here.

The lamb should be within the fold at night."

"Outside is better when the wolves are in."

"You promised not to leave the tower to-night."

"Pray, how can I a broken promise mend? "

"By quick amend."

"Then row me to the land."

"The ship of Prince Samar is at the wharf."

"And what of that? "

"It may seem jealousy,
But I must warn you of the deep designs
Of the unprincipled Samar. He seeks
To ruin you. And of your promise boasts,
To be his guest upon the isle to-night."

"An enemy of his told you all this.
Warning! Yes, warning, warning, all the time!
Father of you; and you of Prince Samar;
And Zoa of the sea."

"Better regard
Even the warnings of an enemy."

"Yes, better than of over anxious friends."

"O darling, hearken ere it be too late."

"The hands of envy are like devil's claws.

I know it is a rank conspiracy.

Because the prince has wealth they clutch at
him.

I went last night, but nothing came of it

Worse than my father's talk. Trust me this
once.

Row to the landing. I will then go home."

"O Miriam, why should you tempt your-
self?"

Lithe as a fawn she threw herself upon
His lap, with velvet arms about his neck.

She gave him an endearing kiss that sent
The hot blood rushing through his veins; with
love's

Frenzied intoxication filled his brain.

"Sweet Judah, shall we go? Trust me this
once."

"O darling, let us try some other way."

"You love me not, or you would trust me
now,

I will go back into the tower at once."

Another kiss robbed him of judgment quite.

Let no one frown on his discomfiture;

For love's dementia affecteth all.

He rowed the boat up to the crowded pier.

Just then the soft-winged night brought to her
ear

Orchestral strains of dulcet harmony.

She stood entranced, regarding not his great Anxiety.

“O Judah, this will be
The grandest night of all.”

“O Miriam, come.”

She drew still nearer to the ship.
Now came the witchery of a dancing tune,
Unconsciously she timed it with her feet.

Frantically Judah urged her to return.
She heeded not. The silver bell rang thrice
As if the boat would start. Her heart beat
hard.

The prince perceiving her, came down and
bowed.

“O gracious Princess, you have come at last.
Permit me to escort you to the throne.”

He, with a scant permission, took her hand;
Her dainty feet sank in the velvet rugs.
Sitting upon a gilded seat high raised
She gazed into the throng, Judah saw not;
The guards had crossed their swords in front
of him.

A golden bell struck once, and twice, and
thrice.

And then a hundred golden instruments
Of music sent ashore a parting cheer.
A hundred rhythmic oars arose and fell.

Judah with frenzy saw the noble ship
Ride as a floating palace on the sea,
Bearing away all that was dear to him

To certain ruin and despair and death.
And he would never see her face again.
Weak! Criminally weak! He saw it now.

Clutching the rail in impotent despair,
He watched the lights grow blurred and dim
And lost at last in the despairing night.

He ran in desperation to his boat
And guided by a friendly star rowed on.
The shoreless water at his folly mocked.

At last a light rose from the water's rim.
Under his quickened stroke it rose and grew
And widened till the island was in view,
As a fair gem upon the glittering sea.

Builded it was upon an anchored raft,
On which the soil was placed in hills and vales,
And level plains, as nature would have done.
The enchanted island was ablaze with light
That rifted through the heavy fronded palms.

Quickly he turned his prow far out, around
To where the low shore in silent shadow lay,
And swept the keel far up the sandy beach.

What could be done, weak handed and alone?
The lonesome dread held with relentless grip.

Now sweetest symphony in dancing time
Floated among the trees — this way it came.

Keeping well in the shadows of the path,
He came near to a polished dancing floor;
Intensely gazed on the bewildering scene.
Around it white, nude, statues held the lights.
Under the silken canopy were set

The players on a hundred instruments.
And as the merry couples tripped around,
He, disappointed, watched for Miriam.
She was not there, neither was Prince Samar.
Trembling and heart-sick he turned away.

Then noticed in the bushes, here and there,
Were gaming booths — now surely she is here.
Concealed, he watched and saw fair jeweled
hands

Throw gold and silver dice for princely stakes,
And sometimes even their immortal souls.

Nor Miriam, nor the Prince were to be seen.
Returning to his boat, he needs must cross
A narrow dell, and here the air was thick
With musky fumes of wine. Hidden with vines
He found a marble grot, unseen before,
A fountain there was spurting ruby wine.

Oh, terrible! A woman richly dressed
Lay prone upon the floor. The clothing seemed
Familiar; still he did not think of her.
Yet curious, he trembling bared her face —
Oh, horrible! The Princess Miriam
It was, so sodden drunk she could not move.

There was no time for useless sorrowing.
In his strong arms he lifted the limp form
And carried it and laid it in his boat,
Which he pushed to the water and sprang in;
Seizing the oars he quickly rowed away.

Meanwhile, Samar, still in his festal robes,
With ten selected from his band, returned

To take the lovely captive to his den.
And what was his astonishment and rage
To find her gone. They searched within, with-
out.

One held a torch low down and saw foot prints.
Then as a pack of hounds they followed down
To where the shore sand showed them deep,
As if a heavy body had been borne,
Also the keel marks Judah's boat had left.
So to the learned in sea lore could be read,
As plain as on a sign, what had occurred.

Samar, trembling with anger, as a beast
Robbed of its helpless prey, stood on the prow
Of his ten-oared galley as they sped away.

The chase is on!

Judah was well away.

O God of love! Hear thou a lover's prayer!
O night and sea and ghostly mist, hide him!
He feels the breeze and shudders at the thought
Of Zoa's dream, "the wailing of distress."

The sad conditions prove the augury.
It is enough. Oh, why should there be worse?
Surely the spirits wail to see her thus.
A ghostly shadow o'er his spirit hangs,
Although the sea and sky are clear and calm.

He grimly rowed with a determined stroke —
It seemed as if the sea would never end —
Exhausted, he would rest. As prone he lay
Looking into the starry heavens, he felt
Their silent influence. Though greatly grieved,

He hoped that Miriam would be as she was
When she was innocent. In bliss he rose,
To find her sleeping sodden at his feet.

He starts! Oh, what is that? A ten-oared
ship

Is bearing down on him. Seizing his oars
He quickly rows away. The galley turns;
He darts across her bows. She turns again,—
No other than Samar stands on her prow.

The boat of Judah built for speed is long
And narrow, and the oar blades thin and wide.
His heavy-muscled arms, swollen and tense,
In the deep water strain the creaking oars,
The boat skims as a swiftly darting bird.

It gains! It gains! And Judah sees a light
Streaming along the water. Joy! Oh, Joy!
It is the welcome beacon on the Tower.
O God, give Judah strength, that they escape.

The galley as a hawk relentlessly
Pursues, and now it gains. Despair unnerves
him.

There's only one escape — the deep, deep, sea
Calls from its peaceful depths — together they
May sleep, and she escape the villain's lust.
He takes her in his arms — too late! too late!

They swing their boat around and grapple
his.

Two of them spring and catch him by the arms.
Samar and another carry Miriam,
Lay her unconscious on the galley bench.

He cries, "Zogbarak, drown the Jewish dog."
The robber chieftain seizes Judah roughly
And hurls him to the bottom of the boat.
Then leaping to the galley, turns its course,
Swiftly they row away. Judah is left
Adrift on the wide sea without an oar,
Baffled and helpless and alone.

On, on,
With level stroke the ten-oared galley sped;
On, on, across the sea, with Miriam
In a drunken stupor still. And when they
reached
The eastern shore, on a rude palanquin
Of oars they bore her up the mountain path,
That upward led through tangled thorns and
briars,
Often by crumbling precipices shrank.
At last they stood before an ancient rock
That kept the secret of a cavern dark.
In it they left the hapless Miriam.

Sweet guardian angels, have you cared for
her?
How pitiful for one so young to die.
Will you not save her from the foul disgrace?
Allow not the return to consciousness.
May the sepulchral silence be for aye,
Blackness and darkness be her funeral pall.

Slowly her sensibilities return.
Was she entombed alive? Appalling thought!
As in a dream, her screams died in her throat.

Palsied with fright she lay in blank despair.

And then the faintest light suffused the
gloom,

A blur as of a misty moon appeared,

Then here and there came forth a glimmering
star.

The ceiling showed the nightly firmament.

And all the cave was filled with softest light.

In wonder she upon her elbow raised,
And saw that all the sides were fashioned like
Dark shadowed woods, with distant moonlit
hills.

The sound of hollow footsteps on the pave —
She, peering, sees it is the Prince Samar,
And cries, "O Prince, explain! How came I
here?"

What place is this? You never spoke of it.

You must have meant it as a great surprise.

We sat together in the house of wine —

Is it enchantment? Is it you, indeed?"

"Yes, Princess, mighty spirits that obey
King Solomon this great enchantment raised."

"Where is the company?"

"Why should we care?"

In Eden there was only room for two."

"When will the ship return? I must go
home."

"Why not enjoy to the full our castle
dream?"

This glorious treasure cave of Solomon,

Where there is everything that wealth can buy?
In childhood's wonder tales you heard it told."

"What will my father say? I must go home."

"Gems to the king were cheap as common stones.

He made this granite mountain's heart to throb
With sweetest symphony of human love.

This grotto is the springtime of our lives.

In here he did enshrine from vulgar gaze,
Of all his lovely wives, the loveliest.

And she, attended by her eunuchs dark,
Lived for the king alone. I, Prince Samar,
From her descended, am the rightful heir
To this magnificence. And you, my dear,
The fairest of the fair, shall be my queen."

"No, not in here. Life is reality."

"Why so? The mighty king transplanted here

All of the world's delights. These granite walls
Bar all earth's labor and discomfort out.

We know not e'en the sympathy of pain."

"The bitter and the sour flavor the sweet;
Even too constant good will cease to please."

"Here the great king, wearied with vanities
And unthanked labors and the cares of state,
Would live alone with one he truly loved."

She sat upon the couch and gazed around;
The great magnificence her spirits raised.
The glamour has already made the love

Of Judah seem too plain and out of date.

“Princess, you need refreshment, take my arm.”

“I thank you, Prince.”

And so they came to where
Great brazen portals rolling back reveal
The sumptuous dining hall of Solomon.
Huge chandeliers hang up a thousand lights,
Under them snowy tables are ablaze
With gold and silver vessels, cups of gems.
As they reclined, obsequious servants
Robed in snowy white served them with luscious
food

And vintage rare of every land and clime.

The waiters were automatons; she felt
Her loneliness. The more she ate and drank,
The more her appetite and thirst increased.

Then opportunely from the pavement rose
A monster Genius as a towering smoke,
For even he seemed to relieve her fear.
He spake as thunder in a distant cloud.

“I am the servant of King Solomon,
Sent here to warn thee of earth’s vanities;
Interpret the reality of love.
A conscience or a monitor I come.”

He placed upon her plate a loaf of bread
And by it set a cup of water pure.

“These, Princess, will sustain and satisfy,
When over sweetened, spiced and flavored, pall.
My royal master tried them to the full

And found that love, plain, true, and un-
adorned,
Was all in all." >

Then Prince Samar, displeased
With the interference, took the bread away
And poured the water on the marble floor.

Then Miriam reddened with anger, cried,
"How dare you? Am I a child? Can I not
choose?

Samar, you love me not. I will go home."

"Only a little pleasantry was meant.
Darling, remember you are mine at last.
Indeed I love you more than tongue can tell."

He drew her to him, kissed her pouting lips.
A lover's quarrel, as a summer storm
Soon passed, doth make the tender bud to grow.

The Genius, seeing his lesson had been lost,
Brought them before a massive iron gate.
His outstretched arm, as a great wind of cloud,
Released the fastenings. The heavy leaves
Reluctant on their groaning hinges turned,
And left a space ten chariots might pass,
Surprised the dusky armory with light
That crimsoned on armor and on arms,
A red stain on the rows of shields uphung,
Helmets and plated breastplates and the
greaves,

The swords, the bows, the arrows, and the
spears.

"The ancient armory of Solomon.

How strange that love's mild influence, which
binds

Heart unto heart, world unto world, debauched,
Should wield the cruel enginery of war;
That fair Lucifer, the morning star of love,
Should fall into the lowest hell of lust,
Murder and arson and the crime of war.
In each spirit is a heaven and a hell.

Princess, inhabit the celestial realms,
And walk no farther in the downward course."

"Spirit, the pleasures of the earth are given
For our enjoyment; using them, we praise
The giver."

"Heed my warnings ere it be
Too late."

Again he brought them to a door
Magnificent. Two pillars held aloft
The arch; ten arms might only span their
girth;
Adorned with golden vines and pomegranates,
With knops and open flowers and clustered
grapes,
And on the panels golden ships sailing
On golden seas.

The spirit backward rolled
The thundering doors. The dazzling interior
Shone as a blazing sun, and in the midst
Arose the golden throne of Solomon.
Twelve glistening ivory steps led up to it.
From the exalted seat the wisest king

Governed the world and the spirits of the deep.

"Princess, the glory makes thee shrink,
And yet, at my command, ascend the throne
And sit in judgment on thine inner self."

When she was set, with fluttering heart, she
watched

The towering spirit as he held aloft
The golden balances on which the souls of men
Are weighed. And then he took a heavy book
And laid it on the high suspended disk,
Then a great nugget of bright yellow gold
He placed thereon, and then a flaming sword.
And now between his thumb and finger took
A tiny crystal that appeared to be
No larger than a tear. Beside this gem
They did not seem to have a feather's weight.

"Judge ye!"

"A grain of love outweighs them all."

"Then give it not for them."

"Why not have them

And love also?"

"Not now. Between them thou
Must choose. (Oh, learn before it is too late.
Before thee lies the vale of sin's delight,
Turn back with me before it is too late.)"

"Not now. There's time enough. Trouble
me not

With ghostly warnings, marring my delights."

"Now is the time. I cannot give thee up.
I follow thee as long as there is hope."

So the Holy Spirit follows on

This time they stand before a solid wall.
The Genius stamps his foot — an earthquake
shook

The earth, the rocks were rent. She saw a light
Shine through a narrow crevice in the rock.

“Princess, peer through and tell us what thou
see’st.”

“I see great rows of jars heaped full of
gems ;

There are high piles of gold and silver coin,
And there are stacks of polished ivory,
And every kind of precious merchandise.”

“Thou see’st the treasure of King Solomon.
For, wise, he knew too much was worse than
want,

And therefore hid it in the mountain’s heart.
He called them vanity of vanities.”

“And yet he fain would keep them while he
lived.

And I, as everyone, would wish to try
Their vanity.”

The spirit darkening said,

“Covet them not ; thou art as near to them
As thou shalt ever be.

Oh, come, once more
I would avert thy doom.”

She followed him,
Although she knew not why, and came unto
A narrow door and low. A feeling strange
Came over her. She heard the spirit say,

"This door must needs be passed upon thy
knees." *then prayer -*

By some strange influence they bowed them-
selves

And passed within and saw an altar built
Of unhewn stones, and on it undisturbed
Lay the white ashes of the sacrifice.
Through the dim crypt the softened light ap-
peared

To fill their souls with a religious awe.
As Miriam by the rustic altar kneeled,
The spirit raised his arms as if to bless.
She saw his giant shadow, as a cross,
Deepen the gloom, and felt a nameless dread.
She knew not then the meaning; afterward
She knew.

The prince just then lifted her up,
And led her through a wide and open gate.
The way was very smooth, and the descent
Grew ever steeper as they thoughtlessly
Passed on, until they reached a caverned stream,
Whose glassy surface never knew a breeze.

They saw a boat for two, that lay unmoored.
With careless gayety they stepped therein,
Nor did they notice when the undertow
Silently carried them far from the shore,
And that the phosphorescent light grew dim,
And they were being carried swiftly down
Toward a caverned grot in the fronting rocks.
Into it the raging waters dashed and roared,

Rushing her down into a dreadful doom,
The swirl of evil when restraint is past.

Too late! Too late! Seven demons in her
soul *remember - oh sin!*
Mock at her wasted opportunities.

The boat was flung against the jutting rocks
And rocked and turned. The ways of evil when
The conscience is not wholly dead often
Are rough and hard, but not more dangerous
Than when it lies in false security:
For now the battered boat leaped to the stream
Of false delight.

The waters seem so still and smooth,
Shadowing the beauty of the flowery banks
That where it leads she neither thinks nor cares;
And here temptation is most dangerous.
Flowers of the most deadly poison grow
In the fair garden of a false delight.

Soon Miriam with Prince Samar reclined
Upon the grassy bank. He held her lovely
hand.

“Darling, let us enjoy this paradise.
Here Spring, Summer, and Autumn reign as
one.

The sun kisses their beauty into life;
The birds in melody their loves declare;
The fair-lipped flowers breathe, in sweet per-
fume;

The generous trees offer golden fruit,
And vines their clusters of delicious wine.

See purpling clouds hang on the mountain
walls,

For all this glory is for thee and me.

Here on this bed of aromatic spice
The fairest and the wisest once reclined,
But thou art fairest of the fair, my queen."

"Dear Prince, you say your queen. When
came I so? "

"Princess, when love united us as one."

"To join our lives there must be something
more.

My father's holy office will a sanction give.
How long have we been here? I must go
home."

"Not long. Another day has just begun."

"Let us return. My father will forgive.
Our marriage will be solemnized at home."

"Love is alone the sacred marriage tie,
And ceremony may not add to it.
Darling, while we are in this vale
Why may we not enjoy its happiness,
Unmarred by the intrusion of the world? "

Nearby two plants flaunted their crimson
bloom

And with intoxication filled the air.

One was LOVE'S PLEADING; one was LOVE'S
DESIRE.

Their mingled odor stupefies the will,
And an unholy passion stimulates.

The first with kisses and a fond embrace
He gave to her, and she the other plucked,
And both placed in her bosom thoughtlessly.

Oh, might some angel write in lurid flame
Above the door of hell, "BEWARE! BEWARE!
THE UNION OF PERSUASION AND DESIRE,"

" With character and reputation gone,
Miriam is now the poorest of the poor,
For she has been deceived, ruined, and robbed;
The precious jewel of her soul is lost.

She tore the fatal blossoms from her breast.
The valley's pleasures only taunted her;
The love songs of the birds were a mockery;
The golden fruits were ashes to the taste;
The wilted grapes held sour and bitter wine;
The withered flowers exhaled a sickening smell;
The clouds hung threatening on the mountain
walls.

With drooping wings her angels fly to heaven.
Seven devils take possession of her soul;
She is despised, deserted, unforgiven —
For sympathy is least where needed most.
The guilty judge with least of charity
Another's guilt.

A voice accosted her,

" Miriam."

" O, it is you, good Zogbarak."

" Where is the loving prince?"

" I know not where."

many innocent -
winds last best line

Oh God pity the best.

"His honied words have wiser ones deceived.
You have already more than you can bear —
I will not chide."

"Leave me alone to die."

"And if I should? With wishing, death
comes not,

At least not soon enough."

"Not soon enough?"

"Too slow at least to suit your enemy."

"Who? Who?"

"No other than your loving Prince."

"Devil! He shall be dead before I am."

"Would you kill him?"

"Yes, like a poisonous snake."

"He sent me. Either you or I must die."

"Then I will die. Strike here, for my of-
fense

Is of the heart, and by its crimson blood
Atonement shall be made. Why hesitate?"

"Bitter, bitter thy fate, O Miriam!

This world is by one-sided justice ruled.

The sin is laid upon the weaker one,

She has to bear the world's uncharity,

The greater is forgiven, the lesser damned.

Be brave, I cannot bear to see thee weep.

Princess, where is thy short lived courage gone?

Rouse thee as a fierce tigress brought to bay."

"Too late! Too late! To think I trusted
him!

And there is nothing left of life for me:

Christ is our atonement!

too late

Torture me not, but quickly make an end —
No, kill the villain. I will live, so I
Can repay treachery with treachery.
Your seeming nearest friend you cannot trust.
There's not a grain of truth in all this world.
Spare me to haunt the shadows of the night,
To lie in wait for the unwary feet,
To ruin them with a deceitful love."

"O beautiful, once happy Miriam,
Beloved of many and admired of all,
Envy could not have wished thee greater harm.
Now thou dost weep. I pity, pity thee."

The once enchanted stream, turgid, and foul,
Flows at her feet down to oblivion.
She threw herself into the stygian flood.
Zogbarak from destruction rescued her.
She sank upon the shore in limp despair.

"Oh, let me die and go to mine own place;
Earth is unmerciful and heaven too pure.
Oh, pity me."

"Pity? So I do.
For of a thousand only one escapes."

"No, I am lost, forever lost."

"Come then."

He led her trembling steps to a deep gorge;
Across it stretched a single, swaying strand;
Up from the dark and bottomless abyss
The stifling vapors of despair ascended.

"Have you the courage to attempt? —

"Afraid?"

Try it. They who have nothing cannot lose.
Your sheltering home is on the other side."

"I will. O God, sustain thy wayward child."

"To keep your balance look not far ahead,
Nor ever backward, nor aside, nor down,
Heed not the jeering mockery below,
Lest fear should make your trembling limbs to
fall.

Loiter not, neither hasten overmuch;
One step will courage for another give.
And if the Gods have further need of you
They will assistance give. And at the worst
Oblivion may be the longed-for heaven
Of tortured souls. Once on the other side,
Look down upon the shimmering sunlit sea,
I will be waiting for you on the shore."

Will, that was wilfulness when in the wrong,
Carried her safely o'er the awful chasm.

When she awakened from her sodden dream,
Strong Zogbarak brought her at early dawn.
Across the sea, and to her castled home.
There she abode until the days and nights
Grew wearisome; the ever ceaseless round
Of daily duties grew monotonous;
Lonesomeness came. Judah had not been seen
Since that distressing night. The silent sea
Might only know the secret of his grave.
Caius was transferred to Jerusalem.
She dare not even think about Samar.
She could not bear the quiet of her home.

The hardness of her guiltiness returned,
And she would be revenged of her own fault.

Miriam, the wanton, in her chamber sat
In the castled tower that overlooks the sea.
By sin her youthful gayety had lost,
Like a cut flower, the freshness of its bloom.
She read the missives of her sinful loves
Unblushingly. And one she read and kissed.

“Oh, dear, the sweet young Tyrian Prodigal,
His father scrimped and saved to give him
wealth

That only ruins him in wasting it.
And have I not the devil's own excuse,
‘Others will get his wealth and why not I?’
I like him best, he is the easiest;
Better than Antipas, the miserly
Old reprobate — he wants his diamond ring;
I stole it from his finger yesternight.

Oh, dear, I have no time to think of all.
Like the summer candle I will singe their wings.

Zoa, come here, look at this purple robe.
Is it not beautiful? Zidarian,
The Tyrian, presented it. He is rich.
He gives me more than I would ask of him.”

“And he is of a short acquaintance too.”

“A week ago his caravan arrived.
I smiled at him as he came by the tower,
Threw kisses from my finger tips, and he

Returned the smile and kisses — we were friends.”

“And you were perfect strangers! Miriam, How could you?”

“I can tell them by their looks. He had a roving eye. I knew he sought A liaison.”

“And you?”

“I snared the youth.”

“What brings him here just now?”

“The Carnival.

This night on Geber hill is to be held

The vernal festival of Ashtoreth.

They go to worship her, the queen of love.”

“Yes, love! Only a trysting place for lust.”

“Rightly, for that is all there is of love, And is inconstant as the changeful moon, Her ruling orb. She now is full and bright, When darkness would be more appropriate.”

“O Miriam, why break your father’s heart? He loves you as the jewel of his life.

You might be warned this time, but you will not.”

“I did not say that I would go with him.”

“No, neither did you promise you would not.”

“And if I did, I would not be believed.”

“O Miriam, it is an awful place.”

“No, the rites are beautiful, the music grand.

Could you but hear the Tyrian orchestra!"

"The rites are sensual idolatry."

"What if they are? Our fathers worshiped calves."

"Only as emblems of the one true God."

"Then, Zoa, why not in the lovely moon
Worship the loving nature of our God?"

"Not with such sinful ceremonials."

"Yes, over-righteous Pharisee, you think
That none are good but the sober and the sour.
Are not our good things given to enjoy?
Father and you would have me stay at home,
In moody meditation and in prayer,
And only reading in his tiresome books.
Why does the youthful heart pulse with warm
blood,

The eye sparkle, the supple limbs exult;
Are they not for a happy purpose given?
I mean to thank the giver of my joys,
Enjoying them."

.

On that ill-fated night
When Judah had been left adrift, alone
And helpless, until hope was almost dead,
A passing ship sighted the lonely boat,
And taking Judah up, went on its way
Unto a distant port. And here he stayed
Until a vessel sailed for Magdala.

Arrived, he mourned for Miriam as lost
In the far cave in Ammon, and ashamed

Of the weak part that he had played and lost,
He left the pier at night, and wandering,
Mused in deep melancholy through the scenes
Where they had often walked.

Beside the road
That leads into the country from the tower
There stood an ancient olive tree, knotted
And gnarled and wise in the sweet secret lore,
Soft nothings, dear to every lover's heart.
Rapt in sweet, tender memories he stood
In the deep shadows of the olive old.

Two youthful figures in the moonlight walk,
Intent upon themselves, they pass him by.
He fears that they will hear his beating heart,
So much one made him think of Miriam.
Oh, could it be? He knew it could not.
Who the other? Flushed with sudden jealousy,
He followed them, hiding in shadows dark,
Across the fields and up the steep hillsides,
Into the shadowy grove of Ashtoreth.

A solitary harp entranced the night
With golden melody, tender and sweet —
Then as the distant mourning of the dove,
Or far off lonely shepherd's pipe, a flute
Interpreted the solitude of love,
Pathetic sighing of the longing soul.

Far out upon the eastern horizon
A silver rim of light appeared, then grew
And upward rose into the full-orbed moon.

The music of a hundred instruments
Greeted the coming of the queen of night.
Upon the knoll a solitary maid,
Clothed in the lustrous samite of the moon,
Sang clear and sweet an ancient song of love.

“ Oh, come, oh, come to me, my love,
As the lovely queen of the night
In majesty rides up the heavens
Full orbéd in light.

Oh, come, oh, come to me, my love,
When the headlands silvered are,
And the moonlight on the sea
Shimmers afar.

Oh, come, oh, come to me, my love,
With the love light on thy brow.
There is no one in all the world
As fair as thou.

Oh, come, oh, come to me, my love,
Oh, come in the beautiful night
And worship our glorious queen
With love's delight.”

A troupe of nymphs tripped on the grassy knoll,
Mantles of gauze together were upflung,
Their motions were like wafting butterflies.
“ O Eros! Eros! Eros!” loud the cry.
A winged boy with quiver on his back,
Running, shot aimless arrows here and there;

The blushing maidens all invite the wound.

Judah was startled by a burst of sound;
Loud drums were booming, fiercely trumpets
blared,

Wild harps were stranging, dulcimers intoned,
The cymbals clashed, the weird pipes piercing
shrilled.

At this the maidens in wild tumult ran,
Their white forms dodging through the shadowy
aisles,

And young men chased them as pursuing
hounds.

Judah thought one of them, although dis-
guised,

Resembled Miriam and followed her.

Beyond a turn she sprang behind a bush

As if to escape, and then fearing she would,

Sprang out into the moonlit path again.

Over her shoulder glancing she beheld

Something that made her look again and again.

Better to see she stopped and turned around.

Then from a side aisle ran Zidarian
And caught her arms.

“Aye, Sweet, waiting for me?”
And then another claimed her as his prize.

“Young man, let go of her. She is my own.
Let go, I say.”

“Not so, old reprobate.”

“O, ho, young prodigal, I say you shall.”

“She loves you not.”

"She has my diamond ring."

"Give him his ring."

"Young thief, I will have both."

"Old villain, go!

She loves you not, and she shall keep the ring."

So thus they pushed and strove, all to her
shame.

Zidarian, his hand upon his breast, cried out,

"Oh, I am killed. He stabbed me! I am
killed!"

A crowd was gathered. Miriam slipped
away

And hurried down the hillside to her home.

Though Judah feared, these revelations
came

To him as an unexpected lightning's flash,
And yet he followed her, he knew not why,
And overtook her at the tower gate,
And coming to her spake her name, "Miriam,"
A world of sorrow in a single word.

With brazen acting she ignored his pain.
Like as a bird, caught in the fatal net,
Beateth its wings against the cords in vain,
So oft by circumstances are we bound.
Her gayety entangled her the more.

"O Judah, dearest Judah, is it you?"
He gave his hand.

"That all? No kiss for me?"

"You tremble, Miriam."

"Let us go in."

"Have you a key?"

"Yes, here it is. Be quick."

Judah, strangely impelled, went in with her. Fearing to trust her, he retained the key. She led him through the dark and silent halls Into the open court. A lover's heaven it was And is, but now it only mocks his pain.

"My dearest Judah, on this very seat We pledged our troth forever and for aye. What now? None of my kisses you return? You are so cold, do you not love me still? What of the golden future that we planned?"

"Miriam, these must you answer for yourself.

The hour is growing late and you are safe,
So I must go."

"You did not hasten once;
And after we so long have mourned you dead."

"Still dead, for I was living in your love
Alone."

"Why, I have never loved but you.
Dearest, I want to hear where you have been."

For fear that he might be discourteous
And give her further pain, he only said,

"I cannot now explain. Let us part friends.
At early morn I go to Bethany."

"'Part friends! Part friends!' How dare
you utter it!

Father was wise; your vows are brittle things,
And never will I trust a man again."

< “Miriam, our love truly was born in heaven.
Still in my morning and my evening prayers
A vision of thyself shall come to me,
And I shall plead with God for you by name.” >

“And shall I only live in your poor prayers?
Once I was rich in love. Now must I beg
A little crumb, one only sad request;
Pledge me in consecrated wine to keep
A sacred chamber in your heart for me
Until I die.”

Then she, not waiting, brought
Two silver cups of sparkling ruby wine.

Now Miriam always in her bosom wore
Two crystal amulets. In one there was
The pollen of the crimson Tammuz flower
That rouses ardent passion in the blood.
She deftly dropped the powder in the cup,
Silently praying to the queen of love;
She gave it graciously into his hand;
And he with heedless folly drank of it.
The pain of parting was like death to him.
But she by many arts sought to detain
His going till the powder had effect.

He hastened toward the caravansary.
Alone, his pent emotions burst in tears.
Oh, the exquisite pain of hopeless love.

Miriam in her chamber, desolate,
Sat staring at the floor. And he was gone!
Her vanities and sins came trooping up
Like sheeted ghosts to mock and frighten her.

Like drops of gold

In frenzy she resolved to end her life.
 With trembling hand she from her bosom drew
 The pearly casket of the deadly drug,
 The light gray poison of the Taanach
 That kills by slow degrees like a disease.
 EMPTY!!! — Aghast she looked again —
 again —

The dread suspicion made her gasp for breath.
 She seized the other charm and opened it,
 And lo! the Tammuz pollen still was there.

“I poisoned him! I poisoned him!” she
 screamed,

And sank upon the couch benumbed with fear.

“Oh, I have murdered him, and he is gone!”
 She sobbed, holding her forehead in her palms.

“Oh, he is gone!” She sprang upon her
 feet

And ran into the hall and down the stair
 And through the gate into the great highway.
 Far off she saw the caravansary.

“God of my father, grant he may be there.”
 She watched to see the camels coming forth,
 And sometimes thought they were, but run-
 ning in,

She saw only the caravanier and cried,

“O keeper, has the caravan gone? Oh!”

“Some time ago.”

“Went anyone from here?”

“Yes, a young man, a scribe, I think he was.”

“Oh, he is gone; I must run after him.”

"No, no, it is the very fleetest line."

Then Miriam reeled as if she would have fallen.

Zoa came in, rushed breathlessly to her.

"Princess, why came you here, and you alone?"

"Hinder me not, the caravan has gone."

"Zidarian's, you mean? Be glad of it."

"I did not recognize the Princess. No, She means the travelers'."

"Oh, he is poisoned —
Will die; I only know the antidote —
Bring me the fleetest camel. I must go."

"Princess, you cannot go alone."

"I must."

The keeper fearing she had lost her mind,

"Go then, prepare yourself."

"Come, let us go."

And Zoa led her, dazed and muttering,
Back to her chamber in the gloomy tower.
Pacing the floor she laughed and cried and
shrieked

And often threw herself upon the couch,
Weeping as though her heart would break, then
fell

Into a staring silence, muttering,

"Here, here, O Judah, is the antidote.
Take it, take it, or it will be too late."

"What is the matter, child?"

"And who are you?"

"Zoa. You are asleep. Darling, you dream."

"Lost! Lost!"

"Waken. You are at home and safe."

"Lost! Lost!"

"Oh, look not so — can you not understand?"

"It is too late! Too late! Too late! Too late!"

A servant roused the sleeping patriarch.

Half dressed, he came and kneeled beside the couch,

Gently he placed his arm beneath her head;

Tenderly smoothed her wild, disheveled hair.

He forced an outward calm to quiet her.

"Be calm! Thy father loves his darling child."

She nestled closer in his snowy beard.

"Father, what are the seven devils' names?"

"Oh, speak not so. My daughter need not know.

Why dressed this way at such a time of night?"

"Yes, I must know. See, they are after me.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, all here.

The seventh is the ugliest of all.

They grin at me. What right have they to scoff?

Want you my heart? Ha! Ha! I have no heart.

Sold it for nothing. No, I am not yours.

False devils, you begrudge me happiness.
Back to your fiery hell, leave me alone.

O father, pray your God to drive them back."

He answered not, but whispered to the maid,

"Send by the fleetest runner for the priest,

Old Zephani. Tell him to come in haste.

Tell him the devils have escaped from hell —

She must have sleep — bring here the lotus
fan —"

"You need not whisper. . Pray, oh, pray for
me.

Oh! Oh! The horrid devils come again,
Are in my heart. They tear me so! You need
Not pray — too late!"

Old Zephani, the priest,
Came in. The father watched his countenance,
To read the faintest sign of hope.

"Good priest,
Heal her, and I will make thee more than rich."

"Most noble patriarch, what time did this
Come on her? What would seem to be the
cause?"

"Only to-night. The cause we do not
know."

Old Zephani took Miriam's nervous hand,
Looked steadfastly.

"Daughter, what troubles thee?"

"Can you not see them? One, two, three,
four, five,

Six, seven. What is in that package, priest? ”
That is the very powder. Give it here.”

“ That is the ashes of the sacrifice.
What didst thou think it was? ”

“ They tear me so.”

“ What canst thou know of this? ”

“ I know! I know!

Murder! Murder! It is the Taanach.

I knew it was — and he has gone from me.

Come back and love me as before. Oh, come.

Why do I beg? Devils, you are to blame.

So swift the camel's pace. Come back! Come
back! ”

“ Who come? ”

“ See them go up and down the hills.

How bright the moon! O lovely Ashtoreth!

Ha! Ha! They were not hard to catch, were
they?

Who said I could not go alone? ”

“ Didst thou? ”

“ The sweetest song of all was thee and me.”

“ Of course the ‘ thee ’ was one who loved.”

So he unraveled from the tangled skein

The common thread of unrequited love,

Or thought he did. It might be tragedy.

He took a powder lighter than the air —

“ Blow! Blow! Waft! Waft! On every
breeze.

Seek him! Find him! Wherever he may be,

On hill, in dale, on desert, or on sea ;
Through fire, through flood, impelled by ardent
love,

Bring him as to the loadstone flies the steel."

"He thought to buy my love with gems and
gold,

In sacks and jars and with a throne of gold.
Oh, shun the tempting valley of delight.
The sparkling river freshens it with joy,
But farther down the noisome deluge pours
Over a roaring precipice. Help! Help!"

Old Zephani drew down his furrowed brow.
Taking a drop of blood fresh from the heart
Of a sacrificial lamb, he made a cross
Above her fluttering heart.

"Wipe it off, quick!
Blood! Blood! Oh, his own precious blood.
Devil, out of my sight! You lie! You lie!
Some wine. Put poison in it if you will.
Oh, I will die! Some wine! Some wine! Some
wine!"

"Servant, a drink of water bring. Princess,
Here is a cup of water fresh and cool."
She threw the offered water in his face.

The priest, disgusted, drew the patriarch
Aside and said,

"Thy daughter is possessed
Of earthborn devils. They are hard to move,
Since some are fair and by the will are held,
And they the very wickedest bring in.

Thy daughter has a secret history,
And one by one the devils came to her,
The fairest leading in the horridest —
They cannot be cast out against the will.
But should there be a change, then call for me.”

And when the priest had borne all hope away,
The father threw himself upon the floor,
And as an oriental rent his clothes,
And tore his hair, and wept as any child,
With screams and cries. There was a din of
 shrieks,

Pleading with a God of passions like themselves,
Or else with vain and futile bargaining.

"O God, O God, hear prayer!

Oh, turn away the fierceness of thy wrath.
Oh, be not angry with me. Save my child.
Thine altar shall not want for sacrifice.
Have pity, Lord, hear prayer, hear prayer—
Oh, she is growing worse, is growing worse.”

The patriarch sank in dumb despair.

Ben Israel, a faithful servant, came,

“Patriarch, forgive thy faithful servant’s words.”

There is a youthful prophet even now
Upon the street beneath the tower walls,
Who by the power of God healeth disease.
Devils of every kind are exorcised.
Father, may it not be a providence
That he is near at such a time as this? ”

“ Oh, hear her cries.”

" Shall I not call him in? "

" Is he the apostate Jew? "

" Of David's line."

" What can he do where Zephani hath failed? "

" His power is great."

" O God, hear thou her cries.

A Jew — No more of him! O God! O God!"

" Then prejudice is more than love or life."

" Oh, bring him if ye must."

" With such a call? "

" Go, bring him in."

" I think he will not come."

" Then here is gold, pay what he asks of thee."

" He never yet has done a work for pay."

" Make him a gift."

" He cannot be deceived."

" Then what does he require? My child!
My child!"

" Only that you believe." *Prayer His name*

" He may save her. Oh, haste, Ben Israel."

The hours dragged their tardy length along.

The lamps were lighted in the ancient hall.

The patriarch started up at every sound.

And still the messengers no answer brought.

Impatient waiting stimulated faith.

At last was heard the sound of many feet.

The prophet, followed by the multitude,

Came to the outer gates. And yet alone
The father led him to the haunted room.

The wailing ceased and all expectant stood.
Jesus spake no word; the silence grew intense.

The eyes of Miriam were riveted
Upon that countenance, fair as the sun,
Framed in the golden locks of early morn.
He spake the silent language of the soul,
Of hope and love and future worthiness,
Not of her weak and sinful past at all.
She would confession make, there was no need;
If he forgives, her sin has lost its sting.
Remorse may wreak, but never can atone.
Her all must be her only sacrifice.

FORGIVEN! FORGIVEN! Rang in her rap-
tured heart.

O golden love, thy silent influence
Can sweetly, surely, change the human heart
And life with potency as natural
As is the sunshine on the budding rose
That has been raised out of the damp, dark
mold

To blossom in the garden of the Lord.
How strange our tears express our highest joy,
Sparkle of dew upon the fringe of morn,
They are the sign of reason's glad return.
Her Savior said, "She sleeps, awake her not."
Her spirit floated on a sea of peace,
A welcome calm after the awful storm.

Reverend

Her breath came softly as the summer breeze.

Some souls like hers are born in throes of
pain;

Some pass into the life of Heavenly love
Not knowing how nor when, their love sincere.

Her father followed Jesus to the hall.
Clasping his knees,

“All that I have is thine.”

◀ “Yea, thou hast rightly said, for she is
mine.

And mine is thine, and thine is mine. Truly
In giving, love the richer doth become.

Her golden love, henceforth, forevermore
Shall be the richest treasure of the earth.”

Then Jesus passed into the press below. >

.
The fame of what was done spread every-
where,

And coming to the ears of Prince Samar,
He for the first time knew she had escaped
The cave. He trembled at the thought of it,
And sent for Zogbarak.

“Hail, chieftain.”

“Hail.”

“Heard you the news?”

“What news, O Prince Samar?”

“That Princess Miriam is at home again.
You told me that she was destroyed. Ex-
plain.”

“I know not how it is, O Prince, unless

The Galilean prophet raised her up."

"I did not hear of that; I only heard
That he had cast seven devils out of her."

"She had that many anyhow, I think.
Over the towering mountains that surround
The Garden of Delight she soared away."

"And how was that? You said she was de-
stroyed."

"I left the devils to accomplish that."

"I have a mission that will try your skill.
Bring Miriam to me alive or dead,
And I will give you gold would sink a ship.
Diamonds in handfuls you shall have, and in
A palace you shall live with her you love.
Zoa is a princess of the ancient line
Which ruled while Israel was Egypt's slave.
What a reward for such an easy task!
You know the seaward passage to the tower;
Your lady love upon the princess waits."

"Zoa loves Miriam."

"What matters that?

She does not owe this woman anything,
Not even mercy. They usurped your land
And robbed your homes to make your people
slaves."

"They claim that devils for the prophet
work."

"The sly fanatic has grown tired of her,
And has departed to Jerusalem.
He means to try to make himself a king,

But he shall not if I have gold enough
To buy the priests and the weak governor.
Jesus and Caius in Jerusalem —

Your task is easy. Bring her here to me."

"She loves the Galilean, then, you think."

"I know she means to sacrifice herself
Upon that necromancer. One who knows
Says that she trudged the hot and dusty roads,
Mingling with the low scum that followed him,
And smelled their fishy clothes and garlic breath,
And waited on him with her queenly hands,
Begged as a favor that he would receive
Her sacrifice, and every little want
She would anticipate."

"She loves him then."

"When he did go, she followed him in tears.
Now from these morbid follies we must save."

"What earnest can I have of the reward?"

"This diamond would a city buy. Take it,
Take it, merely a tithe of the reward."

"You must receive her on the open lake,
Alone."

"Just as you say."

"At the ninth hour."

"To-night?"

"To-night."

"Ah, noble Zogbarak,
Now are you wise. Bring her to me alive,
And I her latest lover then will be."

"Her last, at least."

“ Harken, I have a plan.
Because it pleases him she so much loves,
She mingles with the poor and sick and low.
Tell her, with every piteous circumstance,
Of one down in the flats who calls for her.
Offer to take her there. Once on the sea,
The way is plain.”

“ I cannot bear to use
Her goodness for a bait. I have a way,
Trust me for that.”

“ Well, bring her in any way.
To-night at the ninth hour, in open sea,
Meet me a half league east of Magadan.
Laden with your reward, I come alone.”

The robber gained an entrance to the tower.
Woe to the lamb when the wolf is in the fold!

Good Zoa took the visit to herself,
And said,

“ My dear, you do not seem yourself to-night.
What has gone wrong with you? ”

“ May have rowed too fast.”

“ Something is wrong. You often promised
me —”

“ Is Miriam at home? ”

“ She is. What then?

Again will something dreadful happen her? ”

“ Darling, my promise shall be now fulfilled,
And you shall in a palace dwell secure,
And fair young maidens shall attend your
steps.”

"Miriam says 'tis nobler far to serve
Than to be served."

"Then she will go with me.
There is a needy woman down in the flats,
Who piteously pleading calls for her."

"She cannot go to-night, but I will go.
To-morrow we go up to Bethany."

"But then she calls for her, and only her."

"You talk so very strangely, Zogbarak.
Something is on your mind you dare not speak."

"Call her; the princess must go down with
me."

"The princess must,' you say. Then she
must not.

There is a base conspiracy somewhere."

"In this you love me not, nor love yourself,
Are inconsistent, wish to change my life,
And then refuse my opportunity.
You are the princess of a royal line,
And yet you meekly drudge, and serve your
enemy.

Also your words mean certain death to me."

"Ah, now I see. You have the princess sold
To that rich libertine. Think not of it,
Or God will smite you with His thunderbolt.
You surely do not know her as she is
Or you would strike him down who did but speak
A word in her dispraise. Once she was fair,
But now is beautiful. She knows no race
Nor place, but loves each individual soul.

Her every act unselfish kindness breathes.
 She knows the evil, but the good adores.
 There is not wealth enough in all the world
 To buy a lovely character like hers.
 Knowing Samar — but then I will not chide.”

“ Oh, say no more, or I will hate myself.
 Here, take my dagger, stab me to the heart.”

“ Such hate has promise of a nobler life.”

“ I will go slay Samar or else be slain.”

“ Neither. There is a nobler thing to do.
 Mary, the blessed mother of our Lord,
 Is with the princess, for she loves her well.
 To-morrow we go up to Bethany.
 Jesus is there. They mean to make him king.
 There is an ancient armor in the hall
 Will fit your limbs, also a giant spear and
 shield.

Thus armored you may join the royal guard,
 The glorious army of the new-made king.”

“ A wicked wretch like me? ”

“ He came to save.

Beneath a rough exterior you have
 A noble soul.”

“ Would he forgive my past? ”

“ His mission is to save us from our past.”

“ Trust me, I will be loyal to his cause.”

And so it was, while yet the morning star
 Hung o’er the slumbering sea, they sallied forth.
 Zogbarak in that ancient armor clad
 Went on before, a figure wondered at,

In all the world the first great Christian knight.

Miriam, with Mary, mother of our Lord,
And Zoa, on their patient palfreys rode.

At eve they wound into a valley deep,
Through it gurgled a stream of water cool,
Fed by a mountain spring. Here they encamped.

Beside it Zogbarak set up their tent,
Around and in it they were gathered close.
But he himself nearby kept watchful guard;
For he had seen signs that he did not like.

The silent hours wore on. His nerves grew tense.

A little pebble rolled down the steep path,
As though some foot above had loosened it.
He braced his foot, his heavy spear in poise,
And waited breathlessly. A crouching man
Comes toward the tent — O heaven speed the aim!

The giant spear thrown as a thunderbolt
Sent him to earth, as falls a riven pine.
The chieftain recognized dreaded Samar.
Knowing the signal code he took command,
Ordered the robber band in full retreat.

Then having cleared the valley, he came back
Where Miriam and blessed Mary knelt,
Tenderly nursing the sore wounded man.

“Princess, you surely know not who he is.”

“Nor care, since he is sorely needing aid.”

“ Were he not stricken down, he would not
have

Pity on you. Leave him alone to die.”

“ Undo the breastplate, noble Zogbarak.
The helmet now. Be quick, he must have air.”

Then seeing who he was, she gave a gasp
And would have gone away, but love divine,
Such as the Master taught, soon brought her
back.

She took her silken scarf and tried to staunch
The pulsing blood.

“ Bring water, Zogbarak.”

He ran down to the stream, and dipping deep
His iron helmet, brought it dripping full.
She washed his wound and bathed his fevered
face.

Seeing his life was ebbing from his wound,

“ Samar, may God forgive you, as I do,
Even your greatest wrong. Oh, pray to him.”

There was a look in his fast glazing eyes
That made her think that he at last had prayed.
As a last sacrament, she dipped her hand
In the pure water, less pure than was her heart,

“ May God forgive and cleanse your heart
from sin.”

Baptismal drops fell from her finger tips
Upon a dead white face.

They buried him
In the lone vale that night. At morn they
passed

Forward into the great highway that leads
From Syria down to Jerusalem.

The giant in his armor ever found
An open way through the great crowds that
pressed

On foot, on camels, and on asses, toward
The gathering to the yearly Passover.

On the fifth day they came to Bethany.
The women rested in the sheltered home
Of Simon, bowered in cool shrubbery.

Impatient Zogbarak with the multitude
Rushed down the moving sides of Olivet,
Across the valley of Jehoshaphat,
And up the crowded sides of Zion's hill,
In time to see Jesus, seated upon
An ass's colt, pass through the city gates.

"Hosanna!" troops of leaping children
cried.

"Hosanna to the king of Israel!"

Their pretty acclamation did no harm;
But the seditious Zogbarak was barred,
The heavy gates were closed before his face.
Upreaching his enormous spear, he pushed
The Roman eagle from its lofty perch.

"Come on, ye men, let us tear down the gates.
Before his face the walls and towers shall fall.
Jesus is king, and he shall reign until
Your enemies are underneath his feet."

A wall of Roman spears surrounded him.
Like a wild jungle beast he stood at bay,

Then like a catapult he thrust his spear.
Many before his fury bit the dust,
Ere they by numbers overpowered him.
Manacled, they led him through the jeering
throng.

"Who is this giant robber?" many cried.
One answered, "Barabbas." And afterward,
"Barabbas, the robber," he was always called.

Jesus in barren triumph pressed his way
Even as far as to the temple gate,
In silence viewed the desecrated courts,
Then, sadly turning, passed the outer gate,
And walked to his retreat in Bethany,
Where welcome greetings always waited him,
And on this night a loving mother's kiss
And the pure hearted Miriam's; and yet
Something bore heavily upon him now,
He needs must be alone to think of it.

Miriam without intrusion silently
Into his presence stole. She hungered for
Communion sweet of soul with loving soul,
So sacred, spoken words are sacrilege.
He turned his face merely to recognize
Her presence. Over his countenance
There passed the shadow of a somber cloud.

"O dearest Lord, what is it troubles thee?"

"My kingdom is from heaven, not of this
world.

To-day how empty was authority
Without compelling power. And even now

Their loud acclaim is changed to murderous cries.

There are those that go about seeking my life."

"They cannot harm. Thou art the Son of God."

"All power is given me in heaven and earth; And yet I may not use it for myself."

"Then will we save thee from their cruel hate."

"The Son of Man shall go, but woe to them By whom he goes."

"Escape to Galilee,
Or to the wilderness."

"It may not be;
I came to do my Father's will alone."

"Master, Master, we will deliver thee."

"Plainly, I shall be crucified of them,
But on the third day I shall rise again."

"Then, Savior, may we share thy suffering?"

"Ye know not what ye ask, and yet ye shall."

Martha announced that supper waited them;
Miriam, stunned with sudden grief, went not.
Kneeling with upstretched hands, she tried to pray.

She could not comprehend the awful words,

"Plainly, I shall be crucified of them."

In answer to her tearful prayer for help
She heard, "The third day I shall rise again."

"Shall rise!" He shall be dead and buried,
then!

Strange was the aberration of her grief;
She would anoint him now for burial.

Trembling, into the supper hall she came,
And unseen crept along the outer aisle,
To where the loving Savior was reclined.
Breaking a precious alabaster box,
She poured the sweet perfume upon his head
And on his feet, and washed them with her tears;
And kissing them, she wiped them with her hair,
In sorrow as if he were in his grave.

Judas added the burden of rebuke.
Jesus saw the abandonment of love.

In passionate ascent her spirit spurned
The cold and calculating facts of time
And bathed its wings in truth's unhindered
gleam.

Each day at early dawn Jesus went forth,
And in the Jewish temple taught and healed.
Each evening he would turn his weary steps
Toward the sweet quiet home in Bethany,
Where loving ministry awaited him.
And ever hung the shadow on her heart.
His footfall had familiar grown to her.
She always with refreshment waited him,
Fresh water from the spring or cooling fruit.

It was an hour late. He had not come.
The weary hours wore on. She often rose

And looked into the night. The stars told her
Midnight had passed. Oh, what had happened
him!

She feared the worst. No longer could she
wait.

No thought of self, she went into the street,
And thinking only of his love and loss,
She followed to the crown of Olivet.
She scanned the path where he was wont to walk,
And shrinking saw the shadows of the vale,
And followed up the sides of Zion's hill
On which the temple in the moonlight sat.
She saw the altar fires were smoldering,
And fitful flashed their lights into the pall
Of smoke that hung above the silent courts.

She found no answer to her anguished cry.
Her desolation felt a sudden fear.
She was alone and would have run, but saw
A man burst from the shadows running up
The path. She could not go; she must not
stay.

At last he stood before her in the way.

“Thomas, it is — Oh, where is he? Breath-
less?”

Speak but one word and tell me where he is.”

“Arrested —”

“Say not that. Oh, say not that!
Where? When?”

“Gethsemane — Gethsemane.”

“And you had only time to get this far.

Where would they take him? ”

“ To the High Priest’s house.

One of them said he would be crucified.”

“ The High Priest has no power. No, they
will go

To Pilate. We must go and rescue him.”

“ Impossible. It would be dangerous.”

“ But he would freely give his life for us.

To Pilate’s house. We must go down to Pi-
late’s house.

He will not save himself, but has not yet

Forbidden us to save him.”

“ How can we? ”

“ And if I show you, will you go with me? ”

“ I will.”

“ Here is a little golden charm.

Within it are engraved the characters,

The pledge of royal friendship, love and truth.

The order was begun by Solomon.

These characters have made and unmade kings.

Pilate has one of these. This fortinal

Will bring release. Christ is of royal blood.

Now let us haste.”

“ Now, maiden, follow me.

It was a strange mysterious influence

That made us leave him in his hour of need.

Keep close to me, look strange at everything,

Like we were strangers in Jerusalem.”

Only a mile, and yet the road seemed long.

At last they reached the city gates, and then

More tedious were the narrow, crooked streets,
Crowded with a confusing multitude.

And as they would have passed the High Priest's
house,

The doors flew open and a band of men
Came out, and there was Jesus in their midst.

She gave a startled cry; Thomas restrained.

Jesus, bound and insulted, was alone

Serene. The great confusion caused delay.

John, his disciple, followed. Seeing her,

“Princess, thou art in danger here. Es-
cape!”

“Where are they taking him? He must be
saved.”

The rabble shouted,

“To Pilate he must go!

He shall be crucified. The blasphemer!”

Then Miriam,

“Oh, we must be there first.”

And John replied,

“I know a shorter way.”

“Go on, and we will follow thee.”

And when

They came into a street was quieter,

John told her of the trial as they walked.

“All uncondemned they smote him in the
face,

Spit their vile frothing spittle in his face.

He like sacrificial lamb stood still

In mutest innocence, until Caiaphas

Came haughtily and roughly questioned him,
 'What is it these against thee, witness?
 Speak.'

'Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man
 Descending with his angels out of heaven.'

'Hear ye his blasphemy; it is enough.
 What further need is there of witnesses?
 Take him to Pilate to be crucified.' "

When Miriam to Pilate's palace came
 She stepped into the court magnificent,
 The pavement, the Gabatha of the Jews.
 Before the outer doors grim sentinels
 Forbidding stood. Her heart began to sink.
 Haste always meets with greatest obstacles.

A messenger soon brought an answer back,
 "Welcome, the kneeler at the mystic shrine."

When Miriam in fear was ushered in,
 Bowing, she lowly clasped the jeweled feet
 Of Claudia Procula, wise and fair.
 The queenly one lifted the princess up,
 Of her received the golden fortinal,
 And read the talismanic characters.

"Princess, what urgency doth bring thee
 here? "

"To save the life of Jesus have I come.
 The men are bringing him to Pilate's court;
 They clamor for his life."

"What has he done? "

"Nothing but good. Oh, Mistress, save his
 life."

“Of what do they accuse him, then, my dear?”

“Of blasphemy. He claims to be the Son Of God.”

“Which one of the immortal gods?”

“Of God himself. With Pilate intercede. They will be coming soon.”

“By this our pledge,
I send this letter to the Governor.

Now come with me into our balcony.
Here we can see, and can be little seen.
Look thou, the eunuch has my message given.
How Pontius frowns as he is reading it.
He never liked the Jewish priests at best,
And will release the God Man if he can.”

“O hear! They come! That horrid, howling mob!
There! There he is! Behold, the Lamb of God!”

“See how serenely he ascends the steps.
Pontius receives him standing as befits.
He will release him, Princess, do not fear.
He must. Oh, how I suffered in a dream!
The city was in flames, the temple walls
Fell down and in the crash I heard the shrieks
And cries of dying men. White skeletons
Ran jibbering through the flame and smoke.
It was the vengeance of this demigod.

Look down. The rabble rage like hungry
wolves,

Are howling for his blood. What is it stirs
Their enmity? He never did them harm.
He healed their sick, healed even some of them.
They stand without. They dare not come
within

Or they would be defiled. Pontius goes out
Upon the gallery."

"Oh, hear them cry,
'CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!'
Yet he refuses to defend himself."

"You tremble, dear. Pontius goes out again.
They shout,

'HE TRIES TO MAKE HIMSELF A KING!
CÆSAR IS KING. WE HAVE NO KING BUT CÆSAR!'
They will obey the scepter if it is
A sword. O Pontius, dost thou hesitate!"

"Oh, they are scourging him with cords, oh!
oh!

That cruel soldier has a crown of thorns;
He strikes it down upon his bleeding head."

"Pontius, Pontius, do not let them kneel
In mockery. He is more than a king.
A broken reed for scepter, shame! oh, shame!
That faded purple robe — oh, take it off!
Thy prisoner through the debased disguise
Looketh more kingly than the kingliest."

"Mistress, why do your people treat him
so?"

"Brutality. In earnest shall they kneel.
O boasted Roman justice! Pilate knows

The man is innocent. O Man Divine,
O Jesus, Son of Jove, hear thou my prayer.
Spare Pilate in the fierceness of thy wrath;
These wicked men are more to blame than he."

"They cry, 'BARABBAS!' 'BARABBAS!'
'BARABBAS!'

Oh, hear their cries! 'If thou lettest Jesus go,
Thou art not Cæsar's friend. Cæsar shall
know.

Give us Barabbas. Jesus crucify!'"

"Pontius, there is no need to wash thy hands;
Oceans of water will not cleanse the stain.
Wash them, wash them, eternally thou shalt,
And crimson are they still."

Miriam sank down
And gripped her eyes to dull the awful sight.
The place grew still. Jesus no more was there.
Out in the street the tumult could be heard.

"Princess, my awful dream will come to pass.
He suffers them to fill their cup of wrath."

"Where are they taking him?"

"To Golgotha."

"O Claudia Procula, dearest friend,
This hour of friendship will eternal be.
I thank thee in the name of Christ for this,
But I must follow him even to death,
If such it be. Farewell."

"Princess, farewell.

And when the blow shall fall, remember me and
mine.

A false, weak policy has ruined us."

Without, Mary, the mother of the Lord,
Mary Salome, and the faithful John,
Waited impatiently for her to come.
The dolorous procession passed along.
John knew a passage through the High Priest's
grounds;

Through this they hastened to another street,
And saw the sad procession coming up
The steep and stony way.

With loosened rein
Rode Caius Marcus, the centurion,
His helmed head bowed low in troubled thought.
A trumpeter behind him shouted loud,

"Hear ye! Hear ye! Jesus of Nazareth
Is now to crucifixion being led,
For treason to the Roman Emperor."

(Then followed Jesus — oh, most pitiful —
On his poor purple welter he bore
The rough and heavy cross. The crown of
thorns)

At every step jarred on his aching head.
The Roman guards with scourges urged him on;
Also two thieves bearing their crosses came;
After them walked those thirsting for his blood
In exultation. Roman soldiers marched
On either side to keep the people back
With curses and with blows.

The word is passed,
"Jesus has fallen underneath the cross."

What He suffered, that we might live,

The women crowd by soldiers and by priests,
Nothing but death can stay their frenzied rush.
Mary, his mother, fell upon her knees,
Clasping his upturned face; and Miriam
With silken kerchief wiped the bloody sweat,
And lifted tenderly the crown of thorns.
Did Jesus pay her with a feeble smile?
She thought he did. A soldier struck the
 thorns

Deeper. Caius heard commotion strange,
Turning he pressed his heavy charger back,
Through the excited multitude, to where
Jesus was lying in the dusty street.
A soldier pressed the pleading women back.

“Roman, be kind for your dear mother’s
 sake,
Or the sweet maiden that loves you. I know
You hate these men, and they are insolent.
This man has never uttered a complaint.
Do what your discipline requires, no more.
This is an awful time at best. I fear
The vengeance of his God.”

 Miriam turned
With outstretched arms and palpitating heart.

“Noble centurion, save him, oh, save!”

He looked into her wide appealing eyes,
And felt the compliment of confidence.

“Princess, the gods know that for thy sweet
 sake
I would. But why should I, when he will not?”

Her only answer was her sobs and tears.
Fearing that he had rudely wounded her,
He left his charger and came nearer; said,

"Be calm. He waits his opportunity.
I will do all I can. Men, raise him up."

"He cannot bear the cross another step."

"He shall not try. Here, man, what is your
name?"

"Simon."

"What is your nationality?"

"Cyrenian." *a Negro -*

"Then you shall bear his cross.

A Roman will not. Yet I envy you
The privilege. Indeed, indeed I do.

Come on. Soldiers, make way for us.

Strangely

Man's nature is more cruel than the beasts.
He tortures for the pleasure it affords,
Crowds to the gruesome and the barbarous.
I would not see this were I not compelled."

The sad procession winds the rocky way,
And outward through the gate of judgment
crushed,

Across the open to Golgotha's hill.

The mourning women went not up, but stood
Where they could see what they would rather
die

Than see; and his disciples also stayed.
Jesus must bear his sufferings alone,
Denied his mother's tender ministry,

Or word or company of loving friends.

Miriam whispered to the disciple John,

“Go tell that soldier I would speak with him.”

The soldier came.

“Roman, how may I speak
To the centurion?”

“You cannot now.”

“I must. Tell him that Miriam would speak
To him.”

She slipped a coin into his hand
And promised more. Soon Caius Marcus came.

Miriam threw herself upon her knees,
In wild abandon was her veil thrown back,
With all the eloquence of grief she pled
As a last hope, a last despairing cry,

“O Caius, Caius, Caius, save Jesus now,
A moment more and it will be too late.”

He looked at her as if an angel spake.

“I will though Rome should fall and I be
crushed.”

Then he bethought himself,

“They have him bound,
Those ministers of hell, the rabble horde
The people in the hottest ferment keep.
With gold the wicked Prince Samar supplies
They bribe the soldiers to their cruelty;
And in the awful tempest they have raised
Words of command are blown out of my mouth.
Heaven knows I pity him. What can we do?”

“Too late! Too late! See! The crosses
rise!

Oh, how he suffers! Oh! Caius, go back,
Give him this wine and myrrh to drink. It will
A little dull his awful suffering.”

“I will, for that is all we can do now.
If he were taken down, he would be maimed
And wounded unto death. The air seems
strange,

The heavens red with portent and the earth
Silently waiting in a dread suspense.”

He took the cup, and with it rode away.

And then old Doctor Zephani came up.
Impiously, with mocking deference,
He first addressed the mother of the Christ,
“Virgin, is that thy son? Virgin, bid him
Come down.”

The wretch then made a trumpet with his
hands,
Shouting,

“Thy virgin mother bids thee come.
If thou art able we will worship thee.
Thou comest not. Ha! Ha! The cords are
tight.

The nails are driven through thy hands and feet.
Now, impudent blasphemer, get them free.”

To shield the blessed mother, Miriam
Stood silently between her and the wolf.

“Oho! Here is another of the kind.
Thou art no longer Princess Miriam,

But thou art sinful 'Mary Magdalene.'
Yes, that is good. How did I think of it?
It has a scarlet sound. A 'Magdalene!'
He cast seven devils out of thee, I hear.
There must have been as many more, or else
They all came back."

Her heart wound was too deep
For other wound; she only saw the awful cross,
And heard the tumult on Golgotha's hill.

"Answereth thou not? Hath a dumb devil
too?

Listen to me, thou 'Mary Magdalene.' "

He who was now Barabbas named drew near,
And towering, stood before the railing man.

"What name was that you called her, dog? "

"Robber Barabbas, what is that to thee?

Know thou I called her, 'Mary Magdalene.'
Dost thou, too, love the witching murderess? "

"Kneel down upon your callous knees, old
man,

Or I will smite thee with my sword. Kneel
down.

Ask pardon of the Princess Miriam."

"Son of Beelzebub, we set thee free
Or else thou hadst been hanging on the cross."

"Better I had than him you crucified.

A reptile has more pity than a wolf.

Come, bend your craven knees. How dark it
is!

Felt you that tremor of the earth? It rocks.

Your trembling knees could not withstand the
shock.

What! Up and gone! You have a craven
heart,

For cruelty is only cowardice.

The sun looks like a monster drop of blood."

Then John,

"O blessed mother, take my arm.

A shame it is to let him die alone."

Between the paroxysms of the earth
They felt their way to the deserted cross.
Trembling she leaned her face upon his arm
In speechless grief, too sorrowful for tears.

Jesus looked down. There was a silence vast
As if the earth and heavens were listening
To the sweet words,

"Mother, behold thy son;
Beloved disciple, on thy mother look."

Now the centurion from his charger reached
The wine and myrrh up to the sufferer.

"He will not drink of it. An awful flash!
Verily, he must be the Son of God."

At this one of the thieves began to rail,

"If thou be Christ, then save thyself and
us."

The other answered,

"Dost thou not fear God?

We suffer justly, he is innocent.

O Lord, remember me when thou dost come
Into thy kingdom."

Jesus made reply,

“ Verily, I say unto thee, to-day
Shalt thou be with me in my paradise.”

Again earth rocked with rumblings ominous,
Strange lightnings held for long the heavens
ablaze,

And rending thunder shook the solid earth;
Again the black Egyptian darkness fell.
In the hushed darkness came the cry,
The saddest words, before or since,

“ My God,
My God, oh, why hast thou forsaken me?
“ I thirst.”

Miriam, called Mary Magdalene,
Upon a reed raised to his parching lips
A sponge of vinegar. He drank of it,
Because though small it was the gift of love.

Now plain and strong the voice came from
the cross,

“ It is finished. Father, into thy hands
My spirit I commend.”

Jesus was dead,
Dead of a broken heart. The poor tired head
Fell forward on his breast; the crown of thorns
Fell off, to be replaced with heaven's own light.
The water and the blood from out his side
Followed the soldier's spear, and fell upon
The prostrate form of Mary Magdalene,
As lowly she the awful cross embraced,
(Baptism of holiness and sacrifice.)

When the two noble rulers of the Jews,
Joseph and Nicodemus, came to take
The mutilated body from the cross
They very gently moved her from her place,
Where she again had washed his feet with tears.
And when they drew the bloody spikes, she
turned

Away and with the other women came
To where they laid the limp and helpless form
In the new tomb of Joseph. Here they washed
The Savior's body, stained and soiled and
marred,

And wrapped it in the cerements of the grave,
As if they had no resurrection hope,
Except that Mary Magdalene, who held
The face cloth, cried,

“O blessed Mother, oh,
I cannot, cannot, cover up his face.”

The Romans came and rolled a heavy stone
Against the cavern door and set a watch.

Within the lonesome garden of the dead
The steadfast women tarried through the night,
And through the Sabbath day, and through the
night.

And Mary Magdalene, watching, saw
A faint light whiten on the eastern hills —
The dawning of the first day of the week,
Shaking soft dewy wings of heavenly peace
After that hellish night of dread and storm.

She stands on tiptoe in the grotto door,

Holding a box of very precious spice;
They had embalmed his body hastily.
How small the faith in her who loved him best.
How dark the shadows of the garden seemed,
And all the world.

She ventured forth alone.
She must have help to roll away the stone.
The others, worn with watching, slept; even
His mother. She would go alone and see.

Running along the garden path, she came
Before the sepulcher. The Roman guards
Were gone! The heavy stone was rolled away!

She stooped to enter. Lo! the linen clothes
Were folded carefully. He was not there!
She ran and others brought, and they beheld
The empty tomb.

When they had gone away,
She stood alone without the sepulcher,
Bitterly weeping. She stooped to look again.
Her nerves were to their highest tension
strained,

When spirit or the Holy Ghost controlled
And opened up the spirit world to her.

She saw two angels clothed in purest light,
One sitting where his feet, one where his head
Had lain, and the white spirits, looking up,
Said unto her,

“Woman, why weepest thou?”

She said,

“Because they took away my Lord,

And I know not where they have taken him."

"Why seekest thou the living among the dead?

He is not here, but arisen from the grave.

Remember what he said in Bethany,

'The Son of Man must be delivered into
The hands of sinful men to be crucified,
And on the third day he shall rise again.'"

Still she had little faith, though angel
warned.

Frenzied uncertainty had left her dazed.

Blinded she rose and started to return.

Before her stood a stranger in the path.

How could her loving eyes be holden so,

When she had seen and also heard. He said,

"Woman, why weepest thou? Whom dost
thou seek?"

"O gardener, if you have borne him hence,

Tell me where you have laid him. Then will I

Take him away."

And then a single word
Of loving recognition drew the veil aside.

"MARY!"

"RABBONI!"

She would embrace him.

"Touch me not," he said;

"I have not yet ascended to my God.

But go ye to my brethren; say to them

I will ascend unto my Father God,

And to their Father God."

And he was gone,
As he had come.

And Mary Magdalene
Told the disciples she had seen the Lord.
"Go tell my brethren."

She, the lowly one,
Was chosen as his honored messenger
To preach the great eternal fact that life
Is born of death. Though death has always
been,

And life will always be, it was obscure
And only known to God how man shall rise.
Now it is plainly to the sense revealed.
Men lived and died as though this were all,
When matter is only the chrysalis
Wherein is builded the eternal form
That in the universal ether lives.

Jesus, to give the world assurance, chose
To show himself in his familiar form;
We shall retain our personality.

He passed at will through rock and bolted
door;
We shall be free from earthly hindrances.

He could appear and disappear at will;
By willing, *we* will manifest ourselves.

Jesus still loved those who before were dear;
The loving ties of earth shall still remain.

And thus he showed himself for forty days,
Then led them out as far as Bethany. >

Spreading his hands in blessing over them,
Looking on her and all a last farewell,
He rose into the universal life with God,
His Father and our Father evermore,
Sweet heaven of every liberated soul.

And from this day sought Mary Magdalene
The opportunity to testify.

Her testimony was direct and plain.
For she herself had seen and talked with him.

The spirit seems to be so far removed,
The heart bereft longs for the face, the form,
The voice of those that we have so much loved.
Nor faith, nor hope, nor words of sympathy,
Can hinder the incoming tides of grief.

By day, her work for him absorbed her
thought;

At night the bitterness came over her.

Her nervous nature, oh, so keenly felt
The martyrdom more terrible than blood
Or fire; the looks that stab, the words that
burn,

Silent unsympathy, discourtesy;
The bitter stigma, "Mary Magdalene,"
As a descriptive title of the lewd.

Nor could she realize her wayward past
Was like a foil in which to set her love.

Her friends she felt were smirched with her dis-
grace.

Under the guise of friendship she was urged

To leave her work. Yet always in her heart
The message wrought, "Go tell my brethren,"
She dare not cease to do what he had said.
The atmosphere was dark with scorn and threat.
But oh, the hardest thing of all to bear
Was her old white-haired father's anxious
pain.

Should she return to him? O breaking heart,
Duties never conflict. The word of Christ,
"Go tell my brethren," is a sacred trust.

Also old Zephani, fierce jungle beast,
Was on her track with a relentless hate.
Jesus had cast seven devils out of her
Whilst she the patient was of Zephani.

He hastened to the home of the ex-High
Priest.

Annas received him in the Council Hall.

"Good priest, what is thy will?"

"Your reverence,
My mission most concerns the holy church.
Jesus, that Nazarene, was crucified.

Now where there was but one, a hundred mouths
Blaspheme and claim he is arisen again.

The temple offerings show the effects of this."

"Scattered the sparks in stamping out the
fire?

What now is to be done?"

"Stamp them all out."

"And how?"

"The temple cells are dark and deep,

Will hold them yet, if we begin in time."

"Easy it is to say, but hard to do."

"Give me authority."

"On all but one."

"And who is that?"

"The Princess Miriam,

The daughter of my friend, the patriarch."

"What! Mary Magdalene, the scarlet one?"

Let all escape, but not this murderess.

If she alone be left the sect would still

Increase."

"The temple walls are tottering
If a weak maiden's breath will blow them down."

"Give me authority."

"Where is she now?"

"At Bethany."

"Give me thy sacred word

That I shall not be known in it."

"I swear."

"And swear again she shall not be misused."

"I swear to this. Give me authority."

And then old Annas leaned his wrinkling brow

Upon his finger tips, in earnest thought.

"No, no, not right. Her father is my
friend;

And then if known it would be dangerous."

The priest, knowing his weakness, said in
scorn,

"Aye, thou didst not condemn the Nazarene.
Never will Annas be High Priest again."

“ Well, priest, dost promise thou wilt use her well? ”

“ Better than she deserves, I promise thee.”

“ Well, take the Temple Court’s authority. I will not give thee mine. I think there is A better way than you suggest. The sea Of death reflects the frowning Macherous, The frightened Herod’s wilderness abode. And if the prisoners ever should be found, He will the blame receive. His enemies, The Scribes, will write his history.”

“ I have authority! All hail, High Priest! ”

“ Hast lately heard of Lazarus, the scribe, That was of Bethany? Does he yet live? He claimed that Jesus raised him from the dead.”

“ Yes, hiding in the wilderness. A Nazarite found him living in a cave Across the rocky gorge from Macherous. These lying witnesses must be destroyed.”

“ And when wilt thou begin, good priest? ”

“ To-night.”

“ Well, then, most worthy priest, farewell.”

“ Farewell.”

(“ ‘To-night,’ a fitting time for such a deed —

With hidden hand, terrifying mystery,
The coward will provide an ample guard —
Not many of the priests are like this one —
He threatened me, and I was cowardly.

Well, I must thwart his hellish purposes.
To Herod I will send this very night.”)

At Bethany was there a quiet home,
Vine-clad, nestled in cooling shrubbery.
Through leafy casement crept the soft moon-
light,
Making dim patterns on the rush strewn floor.
Two loving maidens in the chamber sat;
Martha it was, with Mary Magdalene,
Who broke the silence with her tender voice,
“ Sister in love, what were your latest
thoughts? ”

“ Thinking of our dear brother, Lazarus.
Longing I was for his return to us.
It seems as if the good suffer the most.
Banished for loving Jesus, oh, how strange! ”
She turned away to hide a falling tear.

“ Without your kindness we might suffer
want.”

“ I have received more blessing than was
given.”

“ Mary, your voice trembles; are you
afraid? ”

“ One’s courage always lowers in the night.
I hope it is no more than that. I feel
A strange presentiment. What was that?
A shadow passed the curtain. See, another! ”
She held her breath, her heart beat hard and
fast.

"Someone is at the door. They knock!
Again!"

Mary sat stupefied with fear.
Martha arose.

"I will see who it is.
It may be Lazarus.

Who is without?"

"A friend."

Martha, trembling, unbarred the door.
Old Zephani, for he it was, came in.

His guards with swords stood in the open door.

"We seek alone for Mary Magdalene."

"She is my guest; you must not trouble her."
Mary, with courage that surprised herself,
Stood up and asked of him,

"Whom seek you, priest?"

"Ah, here thou art. We take thee prisoner.
Here, soldier, put the irons on her hands."

"By what authority?" With a dark frown
He handed her a scroll. By the dim light
She read it through.

"The rulers then refused
To sign their names."

"There is the temple seal."

"The rulers did not place it, I know."

"Well, it is there."

"Why come at night?"

"Rather, why come at all? Thy blasphemy
Compels it."

"And how have we blasphemed?"

“In saying Jesus is the Son of God,
And that thou sawest him risen from the dead.”

Noting the futility of argument,
She said no more, but full of courage stood.

With cruel irons on her tender hands,
They led her forth and seated her upon a beast,
Then backward through the hill country took
their way

To Jordan's ford and the great wilderness.
The homely palfrey bore her carefully,
As though it knew she was the queenliest.
The moon silvered the crags and mountain
peaks

And hid much of the dread unsightliness.

The cavalcade climbed up the rocky steep,
Descended through the barren streamless vales:
The calm and patient prisoner endured
The hardship and the dread uncertainty
Without a murmur or complaint. They passed
The dark mouthed cave and beetling precipice
And heard the howl of hungry beast of prey.
A dreadful death might wait her farther on.
It mattered not; all other love was merged
In that one love that filled her soul with peace.

Old Zephani tried to deceive himself
That he was truly kind in guarding her
Upon the way.

Just as the fiery sun
Came up to smite the desert with his heat,
They crossed the noisy wooden bridge and stood

Before the massive tower's lower gate.
A generous bribe of gold admitted them.

Within, the light of the suspended lamps
Was in the massive pillared arches lost.
Set in the floor long rows of iron doors
Shut down upon dark dungeon cells beneath.
Strangely they stopped before the number X,
So like a cross. The rusty hinges creaked,
There was a smell, musty and sickening.
O pitiful! The helpless innocent
Was here alone with rough and hardened men.

She read her fate without a cry or tear;
Not without feeling, but sustained by love
And consciousness of Christ's upholding power.

Old Zephani, with a deceitful smile,
Addressed her in low tones,

“ I am thy friend,
Thy noble father's friend. He waits for thee.
No doubt he startles at the steps he hears.
Wouldst thou not come and smooth his whit-
ened locks?

His poor old heart will break to have thee here.
Wouldst be free to go to him? ”

“ I would.”

“ Ah, noble Princess, thou art wise at last.
Here is a little statement; sign it here.
Jesus is dead, there is no longer use
In keeping with his low born followers.”

“ I saw him risen and he lives again.”

“ Thou hast a devil, Mary Magdalene.

Look in that hole, for it will be thy tomb.
Here is a pen. Write here. Sign thy name
here."

She did not move
Or answer him a word.

"Let her enjoy her folly; cast her in.
Let us down slowly; she may yet repent.
Magdalene, how dost thou like it down in here?
Answer. Be quick, or it will be too late.
Think of the darkness when the lid is closed,
And this will be thy permanent abode.
Thou wilt not speak? There is no one else to
blame.

Here in this corner is a skeleton
Of one who was as obdurate as thou.
Sullen? It may be when the light is gone
Thou better mayst enjoy his company.
He was forgotten here as thou mayst be.
See how he grins to see thy foolishness."

In agony she fell upon her knees,
And prayed,
"O Jesus Savior, hear my prayer,
Deliver me."

"Vain! Vain! The dead hear not.
Trust me, I can and will deliver thee."

"Doctor, is there no pity in your heart?
And would you force me to deny the truth?"

"Thou lying Magdalene! Men, draw me
up."

And she was left alone in that dark cell.

The awful darkness saw not her sweet smile,
For Jesus in the spirit came to her
With the same peace that his own spirit filled
Under the greatest suffering. She knew
That he had known before what hers would be
And that His glory should be hers at last.

Calm as an infant in its mother's arms,
Smiling she lay upon the musty floor,
And with a homely crucifix of straws
Upon her breast, she fell asleep, the rest
Of perfect trust.

A call awakened her.
Was it a dream? She heard again the call
Though it was growing fainter. At each cell
The cry,

“We seek for Princess Miriam,
Now better known as Mary Magdalene.”

Ever the cry grew fainter as they passed
Along,

“We seek for Princess Miriam,
Now better known as Mary Magdalene.”

The narrow confines shut her answer in.
When the cry ceased, her heart grew faint.

Nothing
Is sadder than lost opportunity.
In the dead silence were her heart beats heard.

She did not know that Annas, ex-High
Priest,
When Zephani was gone, had urgently

A message sent to Herod, the king, that he
Should keep his prison guards upon the watch
For Princess Miriam, lately entitled
Mary Magdalene, the daughter of their friend
Eleazer, the patriarch. He feared
The man. To put the onus on the king,
Designed within his castle to immure
The maid.

Her opportunity was gone.

The guards not caring might not come again.
Alone she wrestled with her doubt and fear,
With unseen weapons fought with ghostly foes.
Did Jesus know? Did Jesus care? How could
She know? If so, why did she wake too late?
Why not appear when he was needed most?
Was he offended that she wished to live?
Was her desire too great? Could she not say
Thy will be done? Or was he truly dead?
She would have fallen into deep despair
Had she not heard the call again
Far down the hall and louder, louder growing.
Her door was raised. She gave a startled cry.
A stranger face peered through the opening.

“We seek for Princess Miriam, now known
As Mary Magdalene. Is she in here?”

Even that hated name of her reproach
Is heavenly music. Nothing could be worse
Than this dark prison cell. She hailed a
change.

And was the tear of joy upon the cheek,
A sin? It was the brightest jewel earth
Affords.

Strong hands and willing drew her up.
Even the dim light blinded her. Though weak
And soiled with prison grime and travel stain
They led her to Herodias, the queen.

Here she was tended, nurtured, and restored,
And with her gentle ways endeared herself.

Again the fortinal, as a golden key,
Unlocked their royal hearts, so she could preach
The blessed Christ, the precious Son of God
That she herself saw crucified, and buried,
Saw him arisen from the sepulcher.

And now his presence brings new joy and hope,
As the High Priest of the new Covenant.

At the word 'priest,' Herodias fiercely flamed,
" 'Priest!' I hate your sanctimonious
priest.

The very pious John holds up my faults,
The better to conceal his own or worse."

"Good mother, can you not forgive a fault?"

"I might forgive my friends, but not my ene-
mies."

"The loving Jesus that I told you of,
Commanded that we love our enemies.
His mercy follows condemnation close."

"Sweet innocence, you never did a wrong,
But have been greatly wronged. The hateful
wolf

Is on your track. Blood thirsty beast he is,
Could you love him? "

" Yes, I could do him good."

" Dearest, I would not tell you, but I must,
He has accused you of a heinous crime.
Even to-morrow you are to be tried
In Herod's court. He cannot punish you,
He knows full well, but easily invents
A violation of the Roman law.
Vehemence is his only argument."

" Most gracious queen, I will confess to you,
I know what Zephani's charge will be,
And I am guilty. I was wild in sin;
Sought to excite my lover's passion, so
That he would not observe my guiltiness,
And by mistake a deadly poison gave.
Seven devils had possession of my soul."

" How is it then you are so pure and good? "

" Jesus cast all the devils out of me."

" I have an angry murderous devil too,
That on occasion flames — were Jesus here —
I am so sorry that your Christ is dead."

" No! No! He is not dead! He is risen,
And stands before you now. But close your
eyes,

And pray in faith, and promise you will love
Him evermore; he will your spirit cleanse,
Will give you new desires and purposes."

" If he do that he is a real God,
Not the thin fancies that the Romans have."

"Yes, he did love the evil out of me."

"I close my eyes — O! O! I see a light!
I know how you can love him as you do."

"Queen, you have seen the light of heaven,
and there

Are things in earth and heaven we know not of,
Until we know them by experience.

A great prophetic vision comes to me
When Rome, the mistress of the world, shall be
The kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

"How can it be when Roman justice seems
But awful torture? Will it ever be
That they will bow to the poor Nazarene?
Forgive, why did I speak in such a way!"

"There can be no offense, where none is
meant.

I see the wooden cross turned into gold
Become the ensign of the Roman power.
The precious emblem of the love of Christ
Will some day overcome barbarity."

"Not soon enough, I fear, to save your life.
Great Caius Marcus, the centurion,
Loves you, I hear. Your other lover dead,
Appeal to him."

"He will do all he can
Without my asking him."

"The wealthy Prince Samar also may help."
At this her face grew red, then deathly pale.

"Samar is — dead — is dead — and were he
not,

I would not be delivered in this way.
No, I will suffer death as Jesus did,
And by the martyrdom will show the world
The value of his love. At Bethany,
In my great sympathy, I asked my lord
If I might share his awful sufferings."

"You say that Jesus died to save the world.
Why does he then allow your sufferings?"

"Pain is a necessary part of joy;
No rainbow could there be without the cloud
These light afflictions lead to endless bliss;
And faithfulness in this dark, brutal age
Is martyrdom. It is not sin to shrink
At sorrow, but in giving up the truth."

"You say you loved another, how is this,
Yet you love Jesus even to the death?"

"Mistress, the love of Christ is like the air
In which is everything; there is no room
In its pure atmosphere for jealousy;
The pure affection sweetens other love."

"My heart yearns for a precious love like
thine.

Teach me how I may also love the Christ."

"The Master never disappoints desire.
I am rejoiced to share his love with you;
Dividing it we shall increase our own."

To-morrow came, as to-morrows ever will,
With their prospective good or dreaded ill.
At early morning Mary Magdalene

At the open casement of the lofty tower
Sat gazing open-eyed, yet seeing not
The barren landscape hot and ashen gray,
Nor the still face of the sad sea of death
That never to the breeze doth answering smile.

As the passing soul seeth more vividly,
So passed the panorama of her life,
Showing her sweet and childish innocence
Lost in the vain and frivolous, at last
In vile debauchery and wickedness.
According with her mood the bitterness
Was prominent.

“Oh, I did poison him,”
Was wrung from her.

“Yet Jesus has forgiven.”
And still she struggled in her agony.

We give the past a tear, the future what?
Will the new faith light up the gloomy grave?
Can light-winged hope waft in the breeze of
heaven?

Could love find place on which to set her feet?

In prayer she by the open window knelt,
Where troubled souls have always refuge found,

“If it be possible, O Jesus, save!

Nevertheless, thy holy will be done.

In living can I not do more for thee?

Pity my poor old father's trembling heart.

And must I meet Judah I so much wronged?

And yet in heaven they know the inmost heart.

Yes, he will know how I loved only him.”

How I would prize the offered prayers I
spurned!

Yes, we will gather at thy feet, O Lord,
Never to part again."

Nature wisely provides
That we instinctively should cling to life.
She struggled hard although her faith was
strong.

Her opening eyes beheld a cloud of dust
Advancing. Drawing near, she recognized the
face,

Grizzled and grim, of Zephani, the wolf,
Leading a company of beasts like him.
She saw the never-to-be-forgotten horde
That crucified the blessed Lord of Love,
And still fiercely pursuing innocence,
Calling it zeal for God and for His house.

With gestures and with clamoring they alight
Before the tower gate, nor enter in
Beneath a gentile roof, for they might be
Defiled. A little tremor shook her being.

A knock — Herodias, the Queen, came in.

"My child, how can you be so calm? Hear
them!

The hungry wolves are howling for your blood.
The jailer comes. I will not let him in.
O God, it must not be, it must not be!"

"Most gracious queen, be calm and let him
in."

"Here is your veil."

Reluctantly

He placed the shackles on her tender limbs.

“Jailer, why put them on? She will not strive —

Then be as gentle as the law permits.”

Then the transformed Herodias kissed them,
Bathed the rough irons with her burning tears.

The jailer led her down the gloomy steps
Of stone, and left her in the prisoner's dock
Alone.

The king sat on his gilded throne.
Great feather fans waved in the languid air.
The Roman soldiers leaned upon their spears.
Before the throne sat the important scribe.
Upon the right sat crafty Samuel,
The Jewish counselor. Upon the left
There was the empty seat of the defense.
Herod addressed the scribe,

“Is there no one
Who has the courage to defend the maid?”

“Your Gracious Majesty, there is but one,
A youthful hermit who has lately come
Out of the wilderness. He seems to have
Much learning, with refined address,
And understands this case most perfectly.
He prays to have the gracious privilege
Of appearing in the lonely maid's defense.”

“How is he dressed? Is he a Nazarite?”

“He is, Your Majesty, and also wears
Their homely garb.”

The eyes of Herod dropped,
For John, the Baptist, was a Nazarite;
He saw the specter of his bloody head.

“I like them not. Is there no other,
scribe?”

“Only this one, O King.”

“I like them not —
Well, bring him in.”

And soon the scribe returned,
Ushering in the strange young Nazarite
Whose coat was made of coarsest camel's hair
And a rough leather thong girded his loins.
Upon the shoulders hung a woolly skin,
Upon it fell his uncut beard and hair.
He walked erect, the center of all eyes,
And coming forward kneeled before the throne.

The royal guards leaned forward on their
spears,
The mob grew silent for a little while,
Old Samuel arose with searching gaze,
Herod as at an apparition stared.

“Young Nazarite, first let us hear thy name.”

“Most Gracious King, my name is Joshua.”

“Now tell us where thy habitation is.”

“The king must know, the Nazarites have
none.

I lately came out of the wilderness,
Where I sojourn.”

“Thou didst not come out of the wilderness,
This tower is a part of it, young man.”

"Your Majesty, excuse my confused speech."

"Well, what is thy petition, Nazarite?"

"Your Majesty, this world is full of wrongs.
The rich, the powerful, oppress the weak.
My wants are very few. I give my life
Without reward, to right this old world's
 wrongs.

My one request is that I be allowed
To represent this unprotected maid."

"Princess, come forward to the judgment
 seat."

She came and also kneeled before the throne.
Her shoulders heaved with feeling scarce re-
 pressed,
Pathetic figure that would move the heart
Not altogether stone.

 " Maiden, they charge
That in the month of Sivan, when the moon
Is full, thou didst with malice and intent
Murder one Judah, who your lover was,
By giving him in wine a deadly drug.

 Under the law, they claim that life shall
 pay
For life. Wilt thou accept this Nazarite
To answer to their charge? Of him thou
 knowest

As much as doth our court. We only know
He is a Nazarite and an Essene."

She gave her hand in a sweet modesty
That made it seem she was not overbold.

He saw a ring and turned his face away.

It was a plain wide band of solid gold.

He turned, addressed the court,

“ If the king please,

I will alter my terms. Since I have seen

This ring, strangely I cannot rid myself

Of the desire to have it as my own.

Though she should be condemned and have to
die,

This little trifle would not pay the price.

If saved there is no value in the world

Would pay the debt.”

Then Herod said to her,

“ Give him his way, it is a little thing.”

Mary, arising, said unto the king,

“ Not for my life would I take off this pledge
Of love. If he be dead who placed it there,
O King, then will I wear it in the welcome
grave.”

Then said the Nazarite with trembling voice,

“ Not for a whim shall she remove the ring.

I value it, because she values it.

For her possession I possess it more.”

And then the king, half vexed at them, spake
out,

“ Let there be no delay ; we must proceed.”

Mary, with strange emotion overcome

At what the Nazarite had said, staggered
Into the prisoner's seat.

Old Samuel

Impressively arose, slowly began,

“O thou most honored King, ‘Herod, the
Just’

We will entitle thee; for well we know
The straightness of thy justice doth require
Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, life for
A life. In this degenerating world,
It is most fortunate that there is one
Who is a wall against this reeking tide.

Our testimony shows, with dread detail,
The vicious course of Princess Miriam,
Infamously known as Mary Magdalene,
That on the thirteenth day of Sivan she
A foul malicious murder did commit.

Judah, her lover, with a love as pure
As hers was false, drank of the fatal draught,
Given, administered, by her fair hand.
Her wicked heart was green with jealousy;
If she could have him not, no other should.
Thus was the promise of a life destroyed
By her who should have loved and cherished it.

If we had been allowed, we might have
proved,

How by her fascination she had drawn
Unwary youth into her lewd embrace;
How poor Zidarian, the wayward son
Of an indulgent sire, was stabbed to death
In a drunken, jealous brawl for her foul love.

But to return, we give most ample proof,
That Judah, after swallowing the drug,

Lived afterward only a lingering death.
As a live thing the deadly poison gripped
His vitals till it dragged him to the grave.

These facts are shown to be so heinous,
That even mercy is denied her claim.

Shall we, O King, the gilded serpent spare
That lurks by the frequented path to strike
Her deadly fangs? No more should we allow
This human viper to escape the blow.

She may be beautiful, of princely blood;
These make her influence more dangerous.
The highest angel fell into the deepest hell.
Is not the sacrifice of life complete?
Her victim, Judah, was a noble man,
Beloved and honored by the priests, his friends.

Mercy, O King, is for the merciful.
Where was her thought of mercy when her hand
Gave him the poisoned cup? Did she relent?
And snatch the poison from his very lips?
It is too late to ask for mercy now;
Her ears are deaf to such unworthy call.

Thy throne is on two brazen lions placed,
And the great Roman eagle's wings out-
stretched

Make over thee a golden canopy,
Emblems of Roman justice and of power.
No weak and flimsy judgment can come forth
From such a judge. Our cause is thine, O
King.

Crime shall be punished, and the innocent

Are safe."

Behind her veil the prisoner shrank.
Old Samuel's words like arrows pierced her soul,
And rankled more because they were too true.
Through blurring tears she saw the Nazarite
Stand forth. As in a dream she heard his voice,
And his embarrassed hesitation knew.

"Most gracious king, the honored counselor
Has been allowed to dwell in scathing terms
Upon the former life of the accused.
He will admit this does not prove the crime.
He moves to tears by the pathetic death
Of the esteemed young scribe, her trusting
friend.

This does not prove at all who poisoned him.
Two witnesses alone can testify to this,
And one of these is dead, they all declare;
The other cannot be compelled to say.
Who poisoned him? This is the missing link
That leaves them only with the broken ends.
Therefore, Your Majesty, we humbly pray
That thou wilt grant the maid her liberty."

"We will our verdict give. Maiden, stand
forth.

Gaoler, lift up her veil. So beautiful!
By all the holy gods the hand is rough
Would crush a tender flower like that. True!
True!

She is not proven guilty of the crime.
Had we been given the strongest evidence

Her lovely face would brand it perjury."

And here shone out her true nobility.

"Your Majesty, silence at such a time
Would be a falsehood base; I dare not lie
Even to save my life. I poisoned him —
Awful mistake —"

"Go on and tell the king."

"I thought it a love potion. Oh, it was
The deadly Taanach."

"She has confessed.

Young Nazarite, we have the missing link.

Mistake indeed! Can every criminal

Offer a lame excuse? Then are our laws

Annulled, all justice will be set aside.

I, Samuel, counselor of the High Priest,

Demand that she shall pay the penalty

Of her detested crimes."

Herod replied,

"Nazarite, what hast thou to say to this?"

"Thanking thee for thy courtesy, O King,
There can be little said, since she has confessed,
Which makes their evidence clear and complete.

And with the learned counsel we agree,

Motive must have support of evidence.

Though gladly I would bear her penalty,

It may not be. But this I truly know,

That she will hear her sentence with a heart

Untouched by malice, or the least ill will.

In sweetest charity her lips shall kiss

The hands of her rough executioners.

Do not the priests before God's altar stand,
And pray for mercy on their sins and ours,
That He have mercy on the merciful?
Therefore, on bended knees we humbly pray
For mercy on this poor hapless maid.

She has relinquished freedom for the truth,
And she is not a murderer in intent.
Oh, look on that sweet angel countenance,
Goodness and truth written in every line.
Oh, spare her innocence."

Then Samuel,

"O King, the callow Nazarite insists
That beauty is the badge of innocence.
Behold the poison flower, how beautiful.
Does not the sunshine kiss its tinted lips?
Does not the dew sparkle upon its leaf?
Yet in its bosom deadly poison lurks;
The laden bee falls ere it reach the hive.

Justice to one is mercy to us all.
To this we have a right."

Then Joshua,

"Behold the lamb in silent innocence
Before the sacrificial altar stands.
The priest hath pity for its helplessness,
His heart is softened by the sight of blood.
I will not ask again. She has confessed.
And she must die."

Herod the scepter held,
Loathing that he the sentence must pronounce.

"Your Majesty, send for her accusers.

We would some further testimony have.
 The spear point will o'ercome their bigotry.
 We knew it would. Justice all of you love.
 We would be certain of the victim's death.
 This doctor by his office knows of death
 As to the dying he doth minister,
 And often has observed the glazing eye,
 And the unbreathing, pallid lips, and tried
 To feel the heart that is forever stilled.
 Then loving friends turn from the lifeless form,
 Leave it to dissolution and decay.

Do you, your hands upon the Book of
 Books,

As Great Jehovah is to be your judge,
 Make solemn oath that he, Judah, the scribe,
 Whom Miriam, the prisoner, is accused
 Of murdering, is not alive — is dead? ”

“ Impudent Nazarite, how many times
 Have I to say that he is dead? Listen!
 I say I knew the young man perfectly.
 A little child he in the temple played,
 And as a young man was my trusted scribe.”

“ You have not quite affirmed.”

“ Well, then, I swear
 I saw this young man die; I saw him dead.
 I saw the face cloth bound about his face
 So tight even the living could not breathe.
 I saw him buried in the family tomb.
 Is that enough? ”

“ Now, if your honor please,

Let your scribe make a record of his oath.
Again, good priest, will you be merciful? "

"Hear the young hermit! He is desert
mad."

The King though very loath would sentence
her.

Then cried the Nazarite,

"Your Majesty,

One moment more.

False perjurer,

Look now on me, the shaggy Nazarite;
First let me take this woolly mantle off,
And now it is no more a part of me
Than is your innocence a part of you.

Look now, this hair and beard I will re-
move.

They were a false and hypocritic show,
As is your own, anointed with the oil
Of sanctity. Why do you stare at me?

And last, this leather girdle I undo,
Discard the humble coat of camel's hair,
Worn as you wear your false humility.
And these worn sandals I put off my feet,
And am no more a Nazarite. Know me?
Yes, 'perfectly.' I thank you for the word —

And this, 'her victim was a noble man,
Beloved and honored by the priests, his friends.'
Not often can we have the privilege
To hear encomiums after we are dead.
You see me, hear me speak; but I am dead."

Here Mary Magdalene could be restrained
No longer, but upon her fettered feet
Leaped to the side of Judah, threw her arms,
Though bound, against his breast, and sobbed
and laughed

In her hysteric joy. He put his arms
About her, quite forgot the king and court.

The king leaned heavily against the rail,
And half in terror, half in pleasure stared.

"The prisoner must now resume her seat.
The court hath not decision made. Proceed."

"I, King, I quite forgot that I was dead,
For this my flesh is warm and delicate.

My clothing smells not of the musty grave.

Neither am I an apparition. See

How I do walk about with heavy steps.

Not as the moaning of a caverned wind

My speech; my lips plainly articulate."

"The man is false, or Hades broken loose.
Young man, explain."

"That falls upon this man."

"Then I command you to undo this knot.
How is he still alive if he was dead?"

"King, that impostor did not raise him up."

"Who did?"

"We do not know."

"How do you know,
Then, who did not?"

"That son of Satan did not raise him up."

"Whom do you mean?"

“Jesus of Nazareth.”

Then Judah, pointing to the man, exclaimed,

“Your Majesty, he cannot answer thee.

Now bear with me just a little while.

There is no evidence that can convince
Unreasoning bigotry. Seeing, it sees not;
Hearing, hears not; neither will understand.
And the denial even went before
The assertion. His motive is revealed
In all its ghastly hideousness. He would
Destroy the followers of Jesus Christ.

For this, he does not hesitate to use
The foulest means. Even the Christ met death
Upon the cruel cross. And Mary Magdalene,
As he in his derision speaks of her,
Saw Jesus risen from the sepulcher,
And this is her offense against this man.

Shall we regard it as a crime in him
To give this dying world a new found hope,
To cast a ray into the gloom of death?
And shall we shut our eyes against the truth
And murder all who seek the blessed light?

Should we not rather wreath that brow di-
vine

With immortelles, and sing in hymns of praise
The glories of that conqueror who broke
The bars and left the iron gates ajar?
Shall we all sink into a hopeless grave
For his professional jealousy alone?

Jesus proclaimed the loving heart to be

The living temple for a living God.

Who calls man's justice to be more than
God's,

And punish sins truly repented of?

Beside the great white throne Mercy doth
stand

With Justice; her green olive branch is laid
Upon the golden balances of God.

And now with thine indulgence I will speak
A little of myself. Thou knowest me well
As Judah Lazarus of Bethany.

In my profession I am known to thee,
And whether I am worthy of belief.

After the parting with the dearly loved,
The dire effects of poisoning soon appeared
That steadily without control grew worse
Till death released me from the suffering.

The doctor is right in that he saw me die
And saw the stone seal up my sepulcher.
My friends have told me that I slept four days.
I heard a voice say, 'Lazarus, come forth.'
Rising, I took the napkin from my face,
And walked into the light. Jesus stood there,
Martha and Mary also, and the priest —"

Herod broke in with eager interest,

"Hold here, and give us thine experience."

"There was a peace as of the deep blue heav-
ens."

"What form hadst thou?"

"All spirit forms

Are shapen by the will. Of their desires
They fashion gilded palaces more grand
Than imagination builds of summer cloud,
And richer is their glorious attire."

"And how do they converse? In human
speech?"

"By intuition knowledge is acquired."

"Is there trouble and sorrow in that state?"

"None that pertains to this rough world,
Unless it be the memory of it.

Matter, of course, can have no influence."

"How do they pass the time?"

"There is no time;

All is eternity. We live in God

And have the freedom of His universe."

"I wish we knew."

"O King, there is an evidence to all,
And each. There is a witness in ourselves,
Spirit assurance, to our spirits given.
Some future time I will declare to thee
All that was learned. I must proceed.

The Pharisees as witnesses were there,
To see the wisdom and the power of God.

Knowing full well my presence would re-
mind

The people of the work was wrought on me,
His enemies the life of Jesus sought.
So to escape their murderous designs,
I was in hiding in the wilderness.

One night I sat in the refreshing cool

Before my cave. The light of the full moon
Softened the lines on rugged crag and peak.
In the deep silence came the thought of God
And of the world — why He created it,
And bore with it, seeing it was so full
Of sorrow and of sin. Then, strange to say,
As if it were a vision of my thoughts,
I saw a beast bearing a female form
Come round the turning of the narrow path.
What seemed to be a man beside her walked.

As they passed near my sudden hiding
place,
I overheard him speaking earnestly,
‘Oh, now, unhappy maiden, lift thy veil,
And see on yonder hill that frowning tower.
Think of the deep dark dungeon cells.
There, left alone with thy despairing thoughts,
The unmarked moments, months, and years will
pass,

A loathsome death will end thy misery.

Recant, and I will turn and take thee
home.

Thy father waits, and will not be consoled.
Sorrow, anxiety, and loss of sleep,
Produced the apparition in thy mind.’

She answered not at all that I could hear.

‘Impudent Magdalene, is this to be
Thy gratitude?’ At the word Magdalene,
I thought of Magdala.

In my disguise

I came to save. All that has occurred
Is known to thee. He thrust her in a cell
Without a trial, thinking to throw on thee
The obloquy of his inhuman deeds.
If ever her imprisonment was known,
Thou and thy castle would be blamed for it.

Yet 'Justice, justice' ever is his cry;
And if they had it, he would be in hell.

Why did he leave his safe and pleasant
home,

Journey the hot and dangerous wilderness?

Was it to ask justice on this maid?

Or is it not plainly revealed to be

Demoniactal hatred of the Christ? >

A vain attempt to cleanse the stain of blood
With other blood? >

Your Gracious Majesty,
Pardon, and I will speak more quietly.

My heart was bitter when I saw the wrongs

The innocent had suffered at his hands.

This, her accuser, is the guilty one.

We wait the king's decree. We are content."

The king held forth the scepter toward the
scribe,

Thus bidding him to proclamation make.

"Hear ye! The king will his decision give
In this, the case of Princess Miriam."

"I, Herod Antipas of Galilee
And of Perea king, make this decree:

I find the evidence against the accused
Is false, in that the person said to be
Her victim hath appeared in court alive
And in good health and recognized of all.
I therefore make this my decree, and seal
It with the seal of Roman sovereignty,
That Princess Miriam of Magdala,
Is innocent of murder in that none
Hath been committed, and is therefore given
Her liberty.

Caius, detain the man.

Stop him! He must intend that I shall hear
His bitter mutterings. Attention, priest!

Since you have shown yourself so merciful,
And had regard unto the piteous plea
Of the weak and as it seems the innocent,
And since your heart was softened by her tears,
We ask that you would show her courtesy,
Confess that you were wrong, and ask of her
Forgiveness for the sorrow that you wrought,
And promise that you will make good her loss,
The costs of trial, and a liberal fee
To this young advocate, and you may go.
I will not charge you with the grievous wrong
Intended for my throne. What say you,
priest? "

"I am not careful how I answer thee.
To Cæsar we appeal."

"Appeal to him!

Then must you call him from your dungeon cell
Where you shall go. You tried the same appeal

On Pilate. He was weak. You are not now
In your Jerusalem. Her advocate
Was right, you are the real criminal.

Yes, call to Cæsar with your tongue cut out.

Now, gaoler, this my sentence execute."

At this there was a scene that made the hall
Of Tyrant Herod seem a court of heaven,
When Mary Magdalene threw herself down
Upon her knees, with supplicating hands
Before the throne.

In the deep silence rose
The earnest pleading of a trembling voice.

"O King, thy kindness unto us is great,
In that thou gavest back my life. And now
I offer it in sacrifice for this
Mine enemy. And it is doubly dear
In our united love. It hath withstood
The hardest trials; but the Christ hath shown
That we shall be united in a life
Free from the toils and trials of this world.
Oh, pardon him! Accept the sacrifice!"

"No! No! Vicarious sacrifice is wrong.
Why should the innocent assume the guilt?

Justice requires that they who sin shall bear
In full the penalty of their misdeeds.

Beautiful angel, this human wolf turned loose

Would rend and tear thee. Kindness touches
not

His stony heart. Justice requires his death."

“Love is a higher law than justice, King.
Have mercy! Oh, have mercy! This we plead,
As we would pray to God. Oh, pardon him,
As we forgive.”

“To love thine enemies
Only thine own destruction doth invite —”

The king arose and leaned across the bar;
The guards bore heavily upon their spears;
Even the scowling priests in silence gazed;
Judah as if she were an angel stood;

A BEATIFIC VISION ON HER FACE,

FOR ALL ABOUT HER WAS A HALLOWED LIGHT.

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